VALLEY OF KASHMIR AND OTHERS

Valley of Kashmir.
& others


KISHENGANGA R
Sharda
G
U
R
Dudgai Hill
Toabut
Bagtor
Kazalwan
Gorai
GURAIS
TO ASTOR
H
Tragbal
Bandipur
o Kolas
Kundor
Wular Lake
Erin R
ERIN
Ram Radan
Sopor
Mansbal Lake
MUZAFFARABAD.
BARAMULA
Sambal
Gander bal
L. Anchar
PATAN
TO DOMEL
Khilenmarg
Magam
Gulmarg
DALL
SRINAG
Ferozpur
Kag
Pam
Naga
Nilkant P. 11,930 ft.
Dudganga R.
Tosamaidan
Sang i Safid
PUNCH
Doorn
Lidarmar
Charar
Tata Kuti Nil Nag
Punch.
Sunset peak 15,000 ft
15,524
Yus
Katsi Galli
Durgadoban
Pantsal
Shwapyan
Borga
R. Sedau
Vishau
A
Aharbal Fall
Kunga Wat
Nandan Sar
N
Konsar
Brahma
15,000 ft
G
E
RAJOARI
NAUSHARA

MAP OF KASHMIR.



The author gives a first hand information about Trekking and Holidaying in different parts of Kashmir and Ladakh. It is a facinating and delightful narration especially for those who derive pleasure from bountless treasure of trekking. The lucid and facile language leaves an indelible impression on the minds of those who go through these pages in a peaceful atmosphere, will no doubt appreciate all that is beautiful in Nature.

Price in India Rs. 30

UTPAL PUBLICATIONS
MOTIYAR, RAINAWARI, SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

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Revised and Enlarged
Four[illegible]tion

Price Rs. 30.00

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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

In this edition some more useful information pertaining to Ladakh has been added so as to make it more informative and interesting for the persons of varied interests. The reader will, it is hoped, find in this book an ever increasing source of benefit and pleasure.

The book is fairly illustrated with coloured and black and white illustrations to present a vivid picture of the Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir and Ladakh.

The author, unfortunately expired at the time when the book was under print and near completion. I had, therefore, to take care of this and his other publications. Attempt has been made to present this edition in a form that it gladdens the hearts of many who hanker after the limitless coffers of nature.

In writing these pages, I am highly indebted to the following persons with whose assistance the book could see the light of the day.

A chapter on 'The People of Ladakh' by Shridhar Kaul, has been reproduced here from *Kashmir Today* by courtesy of the Editor and the State Information Department to whom we are thankful.

To Mr. Ehrich Peter Cartun-Halbfass for the three colour plates viz., 'The Nichnai Pass Top', 'The Srinagar City (old)', and 'The Ladakhi Ladies'.

To Mr. Utpal Koul for his various valuable suggestions Gompa.

To Mr. Utpal Koul for his various valuable suggestions regarding the improvement of the book and the latest information made available by him on Ladakh.

Last but not the least, I thank the Superintendent, the Wesley Press, Mysore, for his kind co-operation with which we were

able to produce the book well before time. The special interest taken by the press for the early completion of the job is highly praise worthy.

To all these persons who helped in the production of this book, I am thankful.

Motiyar, Rainawari
Srinagar—190003
Kashmir
Independence Day 1979

LOKESH KOUL

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

In this edition the book has been well revised and four more chapters have been added:

1. People of Kashmir.
2. Social Life.
3. Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.
4. Wild Animals.

The chapters 'People of Kashmir' and 'Social Life' have been contributed to 'Kashmir Today' by Shri Lokesh Koul. I am thankful to Shri Lokesh Koul and the Editor, 'Kashmir Today' and the Information Department, J. and K. Government, for allowing me to make use of these articles in this edition.

I am equally thankful to Shri T. N. Khazanchi, M.A., the Superintending, Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Frontier Circle, Srinagar, for writing an article on 'Ancient Monuments of Kashmir'. The Archaeological Department has been kind enough to permit me to use six pictures of ancient monuments in this book which I acknowledge thankfully.

I am thankful to the Curator, Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, for allowing to make use of four pictures of animals from their journal.

I am also indebted to late Col. A. E. Ward for various suggestions on wild life.

Thanks are due to Mr. Lokesh Koul with whose help I was able to bring out the 3rd edition of this book.

I am thankful to my daughter Chuniji Koul Mujoo for looking after me at Pathankot which enabled me to write a chapter on Wild Animals.

A picture 'Summer home of Gujars' has also been added for which I am grateful to late Rev. R. D. Thompson. Some pictures of fossils have also been included.

To all those persons who helped me in bringing out this edition of the book, I am thankful.

Panditpora, Motiyar,
Rainawari, Srinagar,
Kashmir.
April 1971

SAMSAR CHAND KOUL

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The book—Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir—was first published in 1942—that is, when the World War II was raging. Since then many things have happened—not the least important of them being the achievement of freedom by India.

Kashmir today shines as a jewel on India's forehead. Improvement in the means of communication coupled with Kashmir's Natural Beauty and salubrious climate have made this celestial valley a Mecca for all those who are fond of Nature at her very best.

Kashmir is not just Srinagar and Gulmarg and Pahalgám. There are dozens of equally beautiful spots which find little mention in the books on Kashmir. These beautiful spots including Gulmarg and Pahalgám are fully described in this book. To make it complete three new chapters viz., the Main Valley, 'Valleys around the Wular Lake' and 'Ladákh' have been added to it.

The book, it is therefore hoped, will meet the growing demand for an authentic account of all the beauty spots in and around the Happy Valley.

For the publication of this revised edition I am indebted to the following persons:

To Shri P. N. K. Bamzai the Editor 'Kashmir, Delhi' for permitting me to reproduce the Article on Ladákh by Shri Shridhar Koul.

To Shri Mohan Lal Raina, the artist, for the diagram showing distances from Sonamarg.

To Shri J. N. Ganhar, M.A. for variable suggestions.

To Shri Balbadar Sapru for the picture of Gangabal.

To Shri Santji Sultan, M.A., B.Ed., the Artist for copying the map of Kashmir and a diagram.

Motiyar, Rainawari,
Srinagar, Kashmir
May 1st, 1963

SAMSAR CHAND KOUL

FOREWORD

It gives me pleasure to write a foreword to Mr. Samsar Chand Koul's book 'Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir' because he has for years made it his business to interest the school boys in Natural History, away from their everlasting cramming for the University examinations and to use their eyes to see the beauties around them.

To lift up their eyes from the dirty streets and surroundings in the city to the glorious and everlasting hills on which they can feast their eyes as they walk to and from school.

If they will only awake with the sun, they will be cheered by the birds' hymn of praise morning by morning and have the pleasure of distinguishing the various birds by their song. The fact that so many boys have been taught to love birds, especially pleases me. When I think back to the day when I arrived in this country and I called the attention of the boys to the birds, as I wished to know the names of birds I had never before seen. But no one had bothered about birds, or had the slightest interest in them.

Now, thank God, the boys' apathy has changed to interest in a practical form by saving them from harm, misery or death. Such as the following:

1. A boy *notices* a bird fluttering among the branches of a tree. The bird's feet are caught in the string of a kite which had been left by a kite flyer. The boy climbs the tree and along the branch, and sets the bird free.
2. A boy *notices* that a bird in a shop for sale is in a cage

far too small for it. He feels sorry for the bird, buys the bird and sets it free.

3. A boy *notices* that a bird on a metal water pipe does not fly away as he approaches and discovers that its feet are frozen to the pipe, it being a very cold winter morning, deep snow and hard frost. He fetches live charcoal, heats the metal pipe, the ice melts, and the bird is freed.

For these deeds and scores of others, I am most grateful to Samsar Chand for having taught his boys to love birds through his teaching of Natural History.

Srinagar, Kashmir
10th July 1942

CECIL E. TYNDALE-BISCOE

PREFACE

Himáchal or Himalaya (home of snow) is the name given to the northern mountain ranges of India. These mountain ranges contain many fair valleys, the largest of which is Kashypa Mar (Kashyp's hovel), commonly known as Kashir or Kashmir.

Sumer or Meru is also a name given to the Himálaya. Hence Kashyp's Meru or Kashyp's Mountain is another rendering.

This valley is ringed round with mountains which in the higher altitudes again enclose other charming valleys, entrancing lakes and fascinating glaciers.

The beauty and glory of the Himáchal has been sung by poets from the earliest times. The glittering peaks, such as Gauri Shankar (Mt. Everest) 29,141 ft. and Mt. Kailas (22,028 ft.) skirting Manusarwar Lake, are thought to be the abode of the gods. The shady nooks, the rushing brooks and the flowery recesses are believed to be haunted by Reshis (Sages), who assume human shape occasionally in order to guide travellers.

The side valleys are full of vegetation. The flowers which are esteemed most and are believed to contain supernatural powers are Maha gunos (Arisaema), Jog Padshah (S. Sacra). Tilawáñeñ and Nila Kant. Tilawáñeñ, said to be guarded by a serpent, is believed to drip oil and to destroy all vegetation within a radius of 10 yards. The Nila Kant shines during the night. Both these herbs are credited with the power of turning base metals into gold.

How we long to find these magic herbs and flood the world with gold, banish poverty and see people loving one another in peace, goodwill and tranquillity!

The account of the places given in this book was written as the author sat on boulders overlooking glaciers, on the shores of high altitude lakes, in places surrounded by natural flower beds, birds and babbling water. Thus the description is a

faithful picture of many stored-up memories. He has also added native folklore about some flowers and lakes.

His aim in writing this book is to introduce glorious spots, verdant valleys graced with flowers and birds, sparkling lakes and glistening glaciers, to the general public, so that they might realise that Kashmir is truly a paradise on earth.

The honour of training the youth of the country to appreciate and admire nature belongs to the Rev. Canon C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe, who used to lead parties of boys in spring and summer over hills and dales. This good work was continued by the Rev. R. Denton Thompson. These trips have been made an annual affair by Mr. E. D. Tyndale-Biscoe.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to the following persons for helping in the production of this book.

The Principal C.M.S. Schools, Kashmir, for allowing the use of some pictures from school reports.

Mr. B. O. Coventry, the late Chief Conservator of forests, Jammu and Kashmir Government, for lessons in Botany.

Miss G. Palin for drawing two coloured charts of wild flowers of Kashmir.

Master Kánth Koul for the sketch map of the valley.

Dr. H. P. Shungloo and Mr. Triloki Nath Koul for arranging the printing of the coloured charts in Lahore.

Mr. F. Jacob, M.A. (Cantab) for correcting the manuscript and proof sheets.

Lastly, to Dr. A. C. Chowdhury of Rainawari Mission Hospital and Mr. E. D. Tyndale-Biscoe, without whose generous help the publication of this book could not have seen the light of the day.

C.M.S. High School,
Srinagar, Kashmir.
May 1st, 1942

SAMSAR CHAND KOUL

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Gulmarg and its Environs

'It exposes vividly the charms of the famous hill station of the Kashmir Himálaya. The flora and fauna of the place, the pleasant resorts, and excursions to the side valleys have been mentioned'.

Mysterious Cave of Amar Nath

'. . . Gives historical beliefs . . . guide to the pilgrim and the naturalist . . . it has a charm'.

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By Dr B. N. Pandit

A most valuable book on the subjects.

1. THE MAIN VALLEY

Geologists tell us that millions of years ago Northern India was a sea. The present high peaks of mountains were like an archipeligo and the Deccan was then a part of Africa. During the upheaval and subsidence of the earth's crust, the land mass several times rose and subsided as a result of the volcanic eruptions that took place frequently. At last about four million years ago the northern mountains were thrown out and Kashmir took the present form. This geophysical transformation is testified to a good extent by the fossil remains (impressions of shells, trilobites, ferns etc.) which are now found in several mountain spurs at Zewan, Khrew, Khonomoh round Srinagar the summer capital of Kashmir.

Tradition also confirms the above statement. When Sandiman (Solomon) whom God had endowed with the power of understanding the sounds of lower animals, asked the ant what her age was, it replied:

Kaunsarah Kausarah Samb Sarah
Sati Perih Satisar Sat Sarah

I remember the time when Kaunsar Nág and Gangabal were in one level and I remember Satisar seven by seven times.

Kashmir was a lake which was called *Satisar*. *Sati* (Parvati) is supposed to be the daughter of Himálayá. Probably the idea is that the glacial period which now followed covered mountains with glaciers which descended through ravines into the valley and gave birth to this lake. Let us examine some of the glaciers which are seen at present embracing the high mountain peaks round the valley.

A glacier starts from the Harmoukh peak (16,872 ft.) and ends in the middle of the mountain now. During my lifetime

it stretched to the shore of the Gangabal Lake; it must have filled the whole Gangabal valley descending over the Buthsher slope and Wangat valley and thence to Kachinambal and on to Prang, and thus filled the valley-lake. There is still to be seen above Buthsher a river of boulders which is called Hindawend-pàleza which is evidently denuded and left behind by the glacial motion. From Sonamarg side, we see today four miniature glaciers on the Thajiwas mountain peaks. They must have filled the whole Sind Valley and joined the Gangabal Glacier beyond Kangan where they must have left the medial moraines and with double strength added to the volume of the water of the valley-lake.

The Kolahoi Glacier which now skirts the Kolahoi peak (17,779 ft.) and which stretches on the western side as far as the head-valley of the same name must have descended to Lidderwat, Arau and thence to Pahalgám and entered into the valley-lake beyond Ganishpor.

The eastern wing of the Kolahoi Glacier which is now high up, must have filled the Harbhagwan valley, scooped the lakes and then stretching towards the north to Baltal, entered the Sonamarg Glacier to add to the volume of water.

The Glaciers from Astan Marg, Pisu Hill and other parts of the valley must have joined the Kolahoi glacier at Pahalgám. Every side-valley and ravine contributed its quota towards the filling of the valley-lake. The glaciers of the Pantsál Range like-wise played their part in filling the lake. Today we do not find any real glacier on this range, but there are snow-beds on the Romesh Thong, Tatakoti peak and Brahmá Peaks which last throughout the year and do not thaw. In the Chetskön valley the glacial action appears vivid. There are scratches on the rocks and pebbles littered about with moraines all around the valley. Another branch of this glacier flowed down from Koñsar Nág valley, scooping the deep canyon worn out by the

Vishau torrent, and forming the Aharbal Falls entered the lake. Similarly the mountains of the Loláb Valley which must have been covered with glaciers supplied enough water to add to the storage of the lake.

There was perhaps in the beginning no trace of any tree. There were only Nature's first elements like water and rock. Ice covered the surface of the valley. The pressure of the ice and the heat of the sun squeezed water out of ice and snow which descended to the subterranian rocks and under-ground rivers flowed with great rush and gurgling noise to the lower part of the valley.

The avalanches rolling down the high peaks must have floated in the valley-lake in the form of ice-bergs which must have been moving backwards by the gust of wind just as we see today miniature ice-bergs floating in the high altitude lakes of Kashmir, such as Koñsar Nág, Ailapötri and other tarns.

This must have been one of the most fascinating lakes of the world. We can understand this when we observe the charm and beauty of a high-altitude lake sitting the whole day on its shore and watching its change of colour as rays from the angular height of the sun affect the surface of the lake. The Koñsar Nág fills our mind with awe born of wonder, the Tar Sar Lake in the Lidder Valley has a soothing and serene affect while the Gangabal Lake bestows on us peace and tranquillity. This is Kashmir, the wonderland of the Himalayas.

Legend has it that Reshi Kashyap the mind-born son of Brahma, while on pilgrimage to northern India chanced to see this glorious lake. Being attracted by this beauty spot, he sought ways and means to reclaim it. He practised penances and invoked the blessings of his father Brahma and Shiva promised to satisfy his wishes. The Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, held a council on the Naubandan Tirtha, near Brahma Shakri peaks in the Pantsal Range which bounds the Kashmir

Valley on the south and west. Vishnu called the engineer Balbhadra, the brother of Shri Krishna who with his plough made a hole in the mountain near Baramulla and the water of the lake thus ebbed down. A geologist would say that the crust of the earth was weak at that spot. The three peaks are named after the gods of the Hindu Trinity and the charming lake called Koñsar Nág (Karam Saras—foot lake) or Vishnu Pad, Vishnu's foot, lies at the base of this mountain. An ascent of a couple of hundred feet up the mountain reveals the shape of this lake exactly like a right foot with five toes and heel.

Naubandan Tirtha is said to be the three peaks where the gods sat for consultation, but I think, it must be the place at the foot of Tatakoti (15,524 ft.) where, there is a spring—the source of Dud Ganga (the river of milk) which drains the Chets Kön (white stone) valley and carves a fantastic shape called Nawak. Close by there is a rock, called Nostril Rock (14,000 ft.). On the southern side of Tosamaidan there is another Nostril Rock on the same level with it. It is said that when Kashmir was a lake, the boats were moored at these rocks. This shows that the mountains were inhabited then by people who knew the art of construction of boats. It may be that Noah's Ark rested near these peaks.

Thus *Kashyap mar* (Kashyapa's abode) became Kashmir. In course of ages the gods helped in filling the valley with people. Among the leading ones was Nila Nág, 'the mind-born son of Kashyap' who lives in the spring at the foot of Banahál Pass in the Ver district, incorrectly called Ver Nag. It is said that the *Nilamat Purana* containing the rites and ceremonies which are observed now in Kashmir, came out of the spring. Performance of these ceremonies enabled the people of Kashmir permanently to settle here.

The submontane region towards the south and southwest consists of alluvial plateaux which are joined to the mountains.

In fact they are the result of erosion by snow and rain wearing away the soft rocks of the Pantsál range. The mountain torrents have cut this region into several deep ravines. Many a tiny village shaded with walnut, mulberry, pear, apple, poplar and willow trees affords nesting sites for birds. The songs of these feathery denizens are melodious. The water of the streams is harnessed to the working of the flour and husking mills.

There are a number of other alluvial plateaux in various parts of the valley. These are lacustrine deposits and form a very rich soil. Wherever water is available they yield luxuriant crops. The sediment which settled down at the foot of the mountain ranges towards the North as a result of glacial action brought into existence alluvial plateaux such as, Tengalbal, Safapor, Sopor and Lolab Valleys. Just at the foot of Tengalbal (Ganderbal) near the road we see conglomerate sand, and pebbles and silt welded by a natural cement into a rock. They are undoubtedly formed by the action of water and snow covered by the alluvial soil. Some of these alluvial plateaux are irrigated by canals and thus they yield thousands of maunds of *shali*. The Pampor and Latipor plateaux yield saffron (*Crocus sativus*). This precious herb is used in worship and preparation of dainty dishes. There is an Aerodrome on the *Damodher uder* (plateau), which is associated with an ancient legend.

There are four distinct hillocks detached from the main mountain ranges. The Poshker Teng is just near the Pantsál Range. It is sacred to the Hindus. Bhadrun, Kusha Amavasi (about September New Moon) is the day when the pilgrims having an immersion in the spring circumambulate the hillock.

The Ahateng lies on the shore of the Manasbal Lake and is detached from the Lar Range. In spring there are many skylarks soaring and singing and singing and soaring and filling the atmosphere with their delicious song.

The Hari Parbat hill is more or less in the centre of the valley and lies on the western shore of the Dal Lake. It is sacred to the Hindus and Mohammadans. Shri Chakra—a mystic symbol along with various goddesses is worshipped here while the southern slope of the hill contains the ziarat of Maqdoom Sahib, a saint of Kashmir. The rock is the result of igneous action. There are lovely almond gardens round the hill. They provide a spot for outings for the people of the city in spring when the trees are in full bloom.

The Shankaracharia hill is detached from the Shalamar Range by the Aitagaji Gap. It is sacred to the Hindus. There is an ancient temple on the top from where a birds-eye-view of the whole valley and mountain ranges can be had. Lately the whole hill has been turned into a pleasure haunt and pines, acacias, almonds, chestnuts and many varieties of bushes and wild flowers have been planted to attract the lovers of Nature to spend their leisure hours here. At its foot, parks with catering arrangements, have been laid out and charming bowers enable lovers to enjoy their stolen pleasures. The view of the Dal Lake is magnificent. The rock is of igneous origin formed by 'very extensive submissive eruptions of lava and ashes.'

There are many lakes and swamps throughout the valley which testify that the whole valley was the bed of a most glorious lake in the world. The present high altitude lakes, Gangabal, Koñsar Nág and Tar Sar and several mountain tarns are the real beauty spots of Kashmir. Round them lie alpine flowers of opal-like colours, the blue poppy, the geum, the potentilla, the gentian and a great variety of other flowers. One of the mountain tarns is on the top of a mountain opposite to Apharwat (Gulmarg). There is a syncline valley between the two mountains. It is circular in shape and probably occupies the crater of an extinct volcano, or it might have been scooped by a glacier when the whole place might have been covered by glacial action.

It is about 13,500 ft. above sea level. The Wular occupies the northern part of the valley. It is the largest fresh water lake in India. When winds blow from all quarters especially from Nága Marg, they change the smooth surface of the lake into dangerous waves and it becomes a sea. Boats generally cross in the morning. The Erin, Madhumati and the Bohnar enter it from the North and North-east, while the Vetasta enters it from the South. These rivers bring into the lake thousands of tons of sediment every year and it is silted up. There are many lovely spots on the shores of this lake.

Mansbal is a charming lake half way between Srinagar and Wular. It lies at the foot of a grand mountain which is bereft of vegetation. Its waters are a beautiful blue. It is about 40 ft. deep. In July and August there is a carpet of pink lotuses on its surface. It abounds in fish. People visit it in doongas. It is said that *Soma Plant* grew in profusion round the lake from which old Aryans extracted a juice for their worship.

The Dal Lake is one of the most exquisite samples of Nature's Beauty. The reflection of the mountains in its clear waters, the islets covered with willows and poplars, the vegetative strips of floating gardens, the untidy hamlets of peasants, the chatter of water-birds, from among bulrushes, the melodious song of birds from chinars and other trees—all these add to the grace and charm of the lake. There are lovely gardens on its shore which attract people from various quarters. The Hazratbal, the Nasim, the Harwan, the Shalamar, the Chashmai Sháhi and Zeethair, these lovely spots are worth a visit. The Anchar Lake is about 8 miles from Srinagar on the Ganderbal road. The lake is covered with weeds and islets with willows and poplars. There are lovely clear water space in which the surrounding snowcapped mountains are reflected.

The fertile valley of Kashmir is the result of the sediment which has been deposited by the original lake. The action of

According to the Vetasta Mahatmya it is said that Raja Harish Chandra cremated dead bodies at Wanpaush the present Wanpoh. The whole site from Wanpoh to Tsakaresh the present Tsakadhar is holy ground. If any person bathes at the Harish Chandra regularly for three days he or she would acquire *moksha* (liberation from the world).

At Bijbehára there is a ghat called Dewak yarbal where Dewak Reshi a sage had his ashram. He manifested Ganga here which is a spring in the middle of the Mahanadi (the great river) Vetasta. This portion of the flow is called Wotur Wahni (northern flow) and bathing here on the 13th day of the bright fortnight of Bhadron is meritorious.

Pururava, a king of the Dunar dynasty was cursed by a Reshi and became a woman. He bathed here and became man again.

All Sangams (confluences) which the various tributaries make with the main river are considered sacred and bathing on special occasions at these purifies body and mind.

The Romeshi joins the Vyeth at Kakapora. This confluence is called Gambira Sangama. Jayant the son of Indra was cursed by a Reshi to become a crow. At this place Jayant became free and so the origin of Kakapora the city of crows.

The Dubji where the water of the Mar enters the Vetasta is considered holy. Here is the temple of Ananda Bairau where there is a well and the god is worshipped.

Just above Habba Kadal on the right bank there is a ghat which is called Soma Yarbal where people come to bathe on Somamavasi (when a new moon falls on a Monday).

Below the Rughnath Mandir temple there is a small ghat where people come on the Nauratri and wave candles of clarified butter (ratindip) to goddess Tasha whose spring is supposed to be in the middle of the river. The name of the Mohalla is Tashi Wan (Tasha's forest) where once was a forest and this goddess was worshipped.

Below Fateh Kadal on the right bank there is Kali ghat. Once there stood a temple here. An interesting mosque now stands here. It is said that inside the present mosque there is a spring covered with a stone dedicated to Goddess Kali and water from that spring flows out. It is said that there flowed three streamlets into the Vetasta at this spot. The water from Gangakheni (the modern Gankhan and Ratanatsod Nág) flowed into the river at this spot formerly. The last two are dry now. There is a mela held here annually on the Ashtami dark fort-night of Poh.

On the right bank below Ali Kadal it is said that Shri Reshi Pir entreated Ganga when she appeared at Baṭayar and his old mother bathed there. At the confluence of the Chetsákol just above Safakadal on the left bank there is a sacred spot where Bhokhatkishwar Bairau is worshipped.

Shala Teng is a nice camping ground on the left bank. Shadipor lies at the junction of the Sind (*Simha-du-lion's roar*) the Mar and the Vyeth. The ancient name of the place is Shárdpor (the place of knowledge) and the spot where the ceremony in remembrance of the dead is performed is called Shrádapor. There is an island at the confluence on which stands a dwarf chinar tree which is called Akhewat. It is said that Vishnu killed Gayasur Rakhas here and there is a stone which is called Gayashila. The place is called Prayag. The Shraddha (ceremony in remembrance of the dead) performed here has the same merit as performed at Allahabad and Gaya. There is a nice camping ground at Náran Bágh; on the left bank there is a temple dedicated to Nandikishwar a satellite of Shiva. On the right bank the Mánasbal Lake drains into the river.

There are a number of sacred places in Báramulla. On the left bank there is a spring dedicated to goddess Sheladevi; on the right bank there is Koti Tirth (ten million tirthas), Ganganor where people bathe to gain merit on Bhadron Dwadashi, bright

fortnight. On the hillock Gosain Teng there are five springs sacred to Shri Rama and his family. There is an ashram where a sadhu lives. About a mile lower down there is Kani Mojihund where there is the impression of the hoof of a cow which is worshipped.

The affluents of the Vetasta have their origin in various places. Some arise in glaciers some in snowbeds, some in springs, some from fissures in mountains, some in lakes and all flow in its main river Vetasta which on its part carves gorges, cuts rocks, drains valleys and plains and forms a delta and enters into the ocean from which it emanated and finds perennial rest. This reminds me of a verse by Shri Utpaldev Acharya:

Sarva somvet nadi bheda
Bhinna vishrama bhumaye
Namah pramatrvupushe
Shiva caitanya sindhave.

Translation:

Salutations to Lord Shiva Who, so far as His form is concerned, is the universal subject of cognition, and Who, being the (infinite) ocean of consciousness, is the common support of and the common resort of rest and relaxation, for the whole diversity of all the streams of momentary cognitions.

Some important springs in the Valley

Nila Nág which lies at the foot of the Bánahal pass is the largest spring in Kashmir and probably in India. Nila Nág is said to be the son of Kashyapa who made him the king of Kashmir Nágás. About 10 yards from the spring there is another spring of bubbling water somewhat like an artesian well where according to the puranic story Shiva struck his trident span-deep and from where the Gangá in the shape of the Vetasta took birth to sanctify Káshmir. This must have taken place

before the existence of Nila Nág. It is said that the deity presiding over the spring gave to the people of Kashmir the Nilamat Purana which deals with the rites and ceremonies for spirits and gods by following which it became possible for the people of Kashmir to settle here.

At the beginning the spring was circular—'kond'. It was made into an eight sided stone basin 10 ft. deep by Emperor Jahángir in 1612. Sháh-i-Jahan laid out a garden in front of the spring and furnished it with fountains aqueducts and cascades in 1619. There is also a temple here. Lately the garden was extended and a rest house and a restaurant were added to it on one side.

There are a number of intermittent springs which are sacred and people go on pilgrimage to take an immersion (bath) in these.

Trisandhya is a spring somewhat like a segment of a circle in Brang about 4 miles from Kokár Nág. It lies on a raised spur of a mountain. It flows on Shivratri (13th day of dark fortnight in Phagan, about February), and in the two months of Baisakh and Jeth (April-May) up to Nirjala Ekadashi. The spring becomes full of water and suddenly runs dry and rats come out to eat rice which pilgrims offer in worship. After an hour or so the water flows in again and the spring becomes full. This takes place several time a day. A couple of hundred yards away from the spring is a group of seven springlets Sapt Reshi (the Great Bear) the water from which meets the first stream and forms a Sangam (confluence) where pilgrims bathe. I visited the place 60 years ago and I saw water in continual flow and it did not dry up. It is called Sáma Sand. A potter's house stood then on the opposite slope of the spring.

Abu-Ul-Fazal remarked in the Aini-Akhbari 'Sundabrarey', is an artificial contrivance of the ancients to entrap the ignorant Rudra-sandhya is another spring of the same nature. It remains dry throughout the year, but flows intermittently during the

month of April and May. It is about a 3 hours walk from Venthavuthur-Verinag.

Pavana Sandhya is a spring 5 miles to the east of Ver Nág. Its water rises and falls like the inhaling and exhaling of a human being. It flows continuously. Pavana means air. A stream flowing from it is called the Gandaki. The people going there keep a fast for three days. It is said that there is a cave where people enter and find Ammonites (fossils) for worship.

All the above-mentioned springs have a group of seven springlets called Safta Reshi and their water, meeting with the water of the spring, form Sangam (junction) where pilgrims bathe. Vethavathur a spring about one mile and a half from Nila Nág is believed to be the second source of the Vetasta. Close by is the group of seven springlets called Safta Reshi which run dry when Vasak Nág runs dry for 6 months.

Vasak Nág is a fairly large spring about 12 miles from Ver Nág village. The spring is dedicated to Vásuk the satellite of Shiva. It flows for six months and runs dry for 6 months. A week before it begins to flow the wind blows very hard, there are rain and thunder storms, and people say, 'Vasak Nág is coming'. A fairly large stream flows out of it and irrigates a large area. As soon as the autumn irrigation of the paddy fields is over and the crops are ripe, it runs dry. A story goes that a Sadhu took Vasak Nág away in his wallet to irrigate the arid parts somewhere during winter months. The water is highly digestive. The stream flows gracefully between willow orchards and turfy banks covered with yellow buttercups, columbines and forget-me-nots.

Anantnág is the famous spring dedicated to the serpent-god Anant. There are two sulphur springs here. One is near the big spring. The other is in the town. Besides, here there are a number of springs round about. There is also a spring dedicated

to goddess Khirbhawáni, in the town. It is close to the Ziarat of Reshimol Sahib.

At Kulgam there is the spring of Kula Wageshwari (Goddess of speech) which is a sacred spring. This is a glorious valley. There are many interesting spots to see and nice camping sites. It is also famous for trout and local varieties of fish.

Ganga Bedi or Beda Devi is a spring on a mountain spur between Romoh and Shopian on the plateau of Shurwah near Nowgam. There is no snowfall round about the spring. It is 6 miles from robgam-kolar. It is commonly known as Beda Brör. The path goes south-west over a plateau past Barnai stream. There is a stream flowing through the forest 6 miles ahead. It is called Hamsa Wagishwari. Worship here takes place on 8-9 Chet. A road passes from Drobgam to Pir Pantsal Pass.

Manzgam. There is a spring here dedicated to Khir Bháwani. The water changes colour. People believe that in the forest there is a tree the leaves of which appear saffron-coloured but when we search for it we cannot find it.

Kapala Motsan. At Digom, in Shupiyan there is a spring which is sacred to the Hindus. People whose young children pass away, go there on Dwadashi bright fortnight of Shrawan to perform Shráda of the deceased children.

Mattan. 'There is a big spring here sacred to the Hindus. The Tirtha is known throughout India and people go there to remember their dead and perform shráda.'

(*Srinagar and its environs*)

Panzat Nág is a little inside the roadside near Larikpora village in Anantnág district. Some say there are in it fishes blind of one eye. Its water flows into the Vetasta. Some say there are 500 Nags (springs). Every where bubbles rise.

Lokabhawan is dedicated to Mahakal (Angel of Death). It is said that Aurangzeb repaired it. There is another spring at Akahal in the Sind valley dedicated to the same deity.

Karkot Nag near Sali village is dedicated to serpent god Karkot one of the satellites of Khir Bháwani.

Gotam Nág. This spring is about 1½ mile from Anantnag. It is said that Shri Gotam Reshi performed penances for some time here. There lives a Sadhu. There is a tank where lotuses grow and the lotus roots are delicious to eat.

It is said that in the Kulgam Tehsil in the village of Razul there is a pond in which there are two logs imbedded in mud. If some untoward thing takes place these two logs come together and knock each other. About two miles across the old bridge there is a spring at the foot of a plateau whose water is highly digestive. It is called Kōra Nág.

Oma's spring. In the Anantnág Tehsil there are 4 springs situated close together. The central one is large and circular. It is dedicated to goddess Oma. The other three springs are sacred to the Hindu Trinity. There lives a Sadhu family here. Some land is attached to this sacred place.

Sulphur Spring at Wuyan in Avantipor Tehsil. People go there to bathe to get rid of skin diseases.

Zavur Nág has highly digestive water.

At the foot of Khrew plateau there is a spring called Nága Nik. On the spur there is a temple where goddess Jawala is worshipped. An annual fair is held here on Ashad Shokla Chaturdeshi (about June). Children enjoy to slide on slippery stones made for the purpose of sliding.

Khir Bhawani is a wonderful spring at Tulamulla about 3 miles from Ganderbal.

(Mysterious Spring of Khir Bhawani)

Biyhama, Shahpor, Utashan. These springs contain highly digestive water. At Shahpor there is a spring dedicated to Shudashi (a form of goddess Tripura). The mantra contains 16 letters, hence the name.

Sada Malyun, Lolab Valley. There is a spring and also an ashram at this place where long ago lived very advanced souls.

Zinpur. There is an ashram here also.

Gosain Gund is another famous áshram about 3 miles from Anantnág.

Tsanda Nág is Lolab where goddess Tsandi is worshipped. The name of the village is Tsandágam.

At Baramulla on the left bank of the Vetasa there is a spring sacred to Goddess Shaila Putri. There is a lately built temple in the centre of the city. Just opposite this spring on the right bank is Ganganor where water flows down from the mountain. On the hillock called Gosain Teng there are four springs called Ramkund, Sitakund and so on. There is an ashram where some Sadhus live.

Tatapani. There is a hot spring in Wardwan. There people go to bathe to get rid of rheumatism and various skin diseases.

Naudal Springs (nine petals). About 6 miles from Awantipor there is a group of springs where people go to bathe on Bhadron Chatushti 4th day of dark fortnight of the month of Bhadron (about August). They perform shráda (remember their dead) here.

Tral. About two miles from here on a promontary there are a number of springs some of which are highly praised for their sweet water and held sacred. This place is also known for honey and almonds. Close by is a lovely spot called Shikargah which is a game reserve where bears, antelopes, chukors and sometimes panther are found.

There are a number of hot springs in Ladakh also.

Some important towns of the Valley

Anantnág. It is an important centre of trade for the southern district. It is the civil headquarters of the district. The origin of the name is traceable to the spring which is called Anant a satellite of Shiva.

Shopyian. It lies at the foot of Pir Pantsál Pass. It is famous for apples.

Bijbehara. Popularly known as Vijbror is on the left bank of the Vetasta. Probably the town lies on the stones and debris of the ancient demolished temples, hence the place is higher than the surrounding area. It is famous for woodwork especially lattice-windows.

The town was founded by King Vijaya (114-106 B.C.).

Pampor. It lies at the foot of the alluvial plateau of the same name. The plateau yields saffron. The Government of India has started a centre for village home industries here. Woollen blankets and puttoes are produced. There is also a Government Joinery Mill here. The town was founded by Padma the Minister of Ajatapida 812-849 A.D.

Srinagar. It is the chief town of the valley and becomes a cosmopolitan city in summer. It is rapidly spreading on all sides. It is the summer capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was founded by Parvarsen II the pious king of Kashmir who reigned 79-139 A.D. It stands on both the banks of the Vetasta.

Sopor. It is 34 miles from Srinagar on the shores of the Wular Lake. It is commercially very important. It was founded by Suya the engineer of Avantivarman (855-883). Behind it is Lolab, a delightful valley.

Baramulla. During the tribal Kabali invasion of 1947 the town was sacked, its bazar burnt and houses reduced to ashes; men, women and children were maltreated and many killed

and many plundered. Due to the division of India its importance has been reduced to a great extent.

It is being rebuilt now, and is a good business centre.

Bandipor. It is an important town at the foot of Tragabal pass (11,100 ft.). It is commercially very important. It stands on the eastern shore of the Wular Lake. It is famous for woollen blankets. Around it are many lovely valleys.





GUJAR FAMILY IN KOLAHOI VALLEY

2. THE PEOPLE

Kashmir is an old country predominantly inhabited by people of the Aryan race. While tracing the history of this land from the earliest periods we learn about the ways and habits of the people produced by this beautiful land during different epochs, some of whom were men of high order who steered the nation towards progress and prosperity and thus spent their lives in the service of their country.

Kashmir was the meeting place of scholars and savants hailing from various parts of Asia. The valley was dotted with Ashrams and Viharas which were the hub of literary and scholastic activities. Mention may be made of Shadarbatvana or modern Harwan which was a Vihara associated with the name of the great Buddhist savant who was a leading exponent of Mahayana Buddhism. Both Hindu and Buddhist scholars participated in the religious discussions here. Now the monastry is in ruins and the only terra-cota tiles are left to speak through mute eloquence of Kashmir's past glory.

Individual Character

Kashmiris have all along manifested certain features in their national character which have been referred to in their observations by different travellers to the valley. Sir Walter Lawrence for example, writes, 'Kashmiris possess an individuality and national character which will cling to them wherever they go'. According to the historian Kalhan Pandit they were in ancient times great fighters in the field. Nor is this all. They from time to time resorted to non-violent measures which were not of outside Kashmir to press for their rights and demands.

For instance a widow resorted to hunger strike in front of the royal court to have an inquiry instituted into her husband's death. In protest of 'begar' which was imposed on them, the Kashmir Brahmans resorted to hunger strike and got this inhuman practice abolished.

That Kashmiris were great artisans and builders is too well known. Some of the architectural monuments like the Martand temple are the specimens of their ancient arts and crafts are a testimony to the artistic genius and capabilities of the Kashmiris. To quote Lawrence again: 'The architectural remains of Kashmir are perhaps the most remarkable of the existing monuments of India, as they exhibit undoubted traces of the influence of Grecian art.'

Impress of foreign Influence

The people of Kashmir are by nature peace-loving, god-fearing, sweet, gentle and of an artistic bent of mind. This can be testified by the accounts and observations left by the travellers and other observers from time to time. They are handsome, well-built, tall and manifest all the characteristics of pure Aryan blood. The hard and abnormal times through which Kashmir has passed in the past has made the people somewhat cringing in their behaviour. Subjection to foreign rule brought them face to face with acute economic distress. Their mi were disturbed and their hearts knew no peace. The tyranni rule of brutal conquerers was intolerable. The development the people under such circumstances remained hampered. The eternal influences, both good and bad, left their impress on the thought pattern of its inhabitants and foreign invasions left adverse effects on their character, producing strange angularities in it.

The development of body and mind of a people depends upon the environment in which they are bread and brought up

and it, therefore, varies with different strata of society. In the past aristocratic families had every kind of facility to educate their children so that they could preserve their position of vantage and dominate the rest of the population. But to the poor such facilities were denied and they, therefore, failed to bring up their children on the same standard. This state of affairs helped to perpetuates class division and thus impeded the progress of the country as a whole.

The limited number of educational institutions which then existed could not prove useful to the masses. Their circumstances prevented them from taking advantage of such institutions with the result that the majority of the people remained illiterate so much so that gap then left between them and the literate has not been filled up to this day and it may take several decades more to banish mass illiteracy from the country. Now the education is extensive and colleges, medical, technical and of fine arts have spread throughout the valley.

The Women

Kashmir, besides its natural beauty, is also renowned for its beautiful women whose dark lotus eyes, rosy cheeks long hair, clear cut features and cypress stature have impressed many a foreign observer. Among other things one will find them ideally modest, gentle, sweet and shy. It is really thrilling experience see a beautiful Kashmiri woman in the lap of the nature under ie radiant rays of the sun or the soothing beams of the moon or even under the transparent shadows of the clouds. The fabulous beauty of Kashmiri women has been sung by many a traveller to the country. For instance, Marco Polo observed that the beauty of Kashmiri women was superb.

The chequered history of Kashmir presents examples of women who have distinguished themselves in various fields in its different epochs. A long list of such prominent women who

rose to the occasion at critical junctures can be prepared and this will show that the women of Kashmir have been brave and enterprising. They had the capacity to hold the highest offices of state and did not lack opportunities to distinguish themselves as administrators and leaders. Guided by their natural intelligence they could tackle the most difficult problems very efficiently. Although education among the fair sex was not as common as we find it today yet there have been scholars and poets among the women of Kashmir who made a mark in the domain of poetry and song. History also bears witness to the fact that the women of Kashmir left a great impress on the people of other nationalities who chanced to stay in this beautiful land.

Spreading of Education

It was never thought proper to keep the women folk ignorant and illiterate, but the type of education that would suit them and the result thereof would always be considered. The desired object was to educate boys and girls on equal levels, but various factors in the social and economic set up stood in the way. Today however the tide has turned and we see quite a new picture. Educational institutions have been opened in almost every corner of the state for the benefit of the people and scholarships have been provided to attract the masses to the institutions and to create interest among them for letters and learning. The fair sex are taking full advantage of such institutions so much so that we find many girl students going in for higher studies and research outside the state. Among the subjects studied by Kashmiri women domestic science, music and education occupy a prominent position. The fact that Kashmiri women are eager to educate themselves holds out the promise of the early liquidation of illiteracy in the land for when we educate a male we educate a single individual but when we educate a female we bring enlightenment to a whole family.

In society Kashmiri women have a high place. They have high sense of responsibility and cheer up their men folk if and when they are disturbed in mind. Like women elsewhere they have a weakness for fancy dresses and ornaments to adorn themselves to the best advantage.

The oldest lady in the house administers all its affairs. She looks to the interests of every individual and is a good housewife. Under such circumstances the joint family system which is still predominant here runs smoothly. Women among the agricultural classes share with their menfolk a great part of labour in the fields and thus help effectively to improve the economic conditions of their families. A strong-willed woman often wields dictatorial power and by disciplining the home properly she lays a sure foundation for its future stability and progress.

A Hopeful Future

A great new day of hope is dawning for the women of Kashmir when we all shall see them happy and prosperous, when, in fact, we shall see the nation prosperous, the happiness and contentment of women is the only sure guarantee for the advancement of the nation.

Kashmir is an agricultural country and the majority of the people are occupied with work on farms and fields. A small section however, turns to Government employment or business or to Arts and Crafts. The great skill of the Kashmiri as a craftsman is acknowledged on all hands and the beauty and excellence of his workmanship are justly famous all over the world.

A Kashmiri takes keen interest in educating his children. In many cases the people have helped the Government in constructing school buildings at the public initiative which naturally helped their own children in getting education.

The vocabulary of the tongue spoken by the people is mainly drawn from Sanskrit, but its present day form also contains a profuse admixture of Persian and Arabic words. The first Kashmiri to write a Grammar of Kashmiri was Pandit Ishwar Koul who produced his important work in 1869.

The people have an attractive dress and well-ventilated, generally three storeyed buildings to live in. Things have changed radically in Kashmir bringing about a revolution, social and economic in the land. The Kashmiri had always given proof of his capacity to adjust himself to changing conditions and it goes without saying that he will adjust himself successfully to the entirely new social set-up in which he finds himself today.

3. SOCIAL LIFE

Kashmir of old was an haunting place of sages and wise men who practised spiritualism and devoted their time to learning and teaching. They were believed to be of the Aryan race with their first abode in Kashmir. When the population thickened and the search for more land was found necessary, some of these people left this land and went to settle in other parts of the world. The people who continued to remain in this part of the world were known as Kashmiris. Their ways and means of rehabilitation are as old as their history and change with the people living at different places of altitude. Much has been described of Kashmir, about her beauty, climate etc. but of course, with some exceptions, the social side, has been ignored. Upto the 15th of August 1947, Kashmir has all along been effected by many foreign influences and therefore greatly influenced the people also. But with all this great outer pressure of subjection and conversion, most of the people held their banner high and did not submit themselves to this external force and kept to their traditions, thus exhibiting their high sense of character and self-respect.

As stated Kashmiris have Aryan blood and have the same physical features as history describes of them, fair complexioned, physically strong, well built and handsome. Womenfolk surpass men in beauty and are therefore considered as paragons of beauty. Many of these paragons pass unseen and unnoticed almost because of economic stringency. Truly a poet has well described:

> Like apples ripe and many a pear,
> That waste away in wild excess

In wondrous valleys of Kashmere,
So much of human loveliness
To dust returns unseen, unknown
Like fallen leaves of roses blown.

Ancient history has described the Hindus the then predominantly inhabitants of Kashmir, as very intelligent people with a high sense of humour and sharp foresight. Kashmir has a high philosophy inasmuch as that people from other parts of the world used to come here to study. Even today the Indian Hindus while performing the holy-thread ceremony are made to walk seven steps towards Kashmir meaning thereby that they are sent to Kashmir for study and then return after completion.

Dress

Kashmiris have a dress of a unique type which will not be found in other countries. It is known as Pheran and Poots used by both male and female with a little difference in tailoring. The Pheran and Poots consists of two gowns, one on the other, and when put on fall to the feet in the case of a Hindu and upto knees in the case of a Mussalman. These gowns are generally closed at the neck by strings or by a button. In winter the poots is prepared of cotton and pheran of wool and in summer both are of cotton. The sleeves of these gowns are loose and wide open in the case of Mohammadans and in the case of Hindus these are long and narrow with turned ends but these are also replaced by loose and wide open sleeves. Mohammadan ladies use embroidered gowns while the Hindu ladies have one inch wide ribbon affixed at the neck and at the skirt. Hindu ladies use a coloured preferably pashmina girdle round their waist. For head-dress, during Mohammadan rule, Hindus were given to Moghul type of turban which used to be of 20 yards in length. This is now disappearing. Mohammadans

also use turbans but most of them use skull caps especially the farmers when working in fields to save themselves from sun-burn. For footwear people were used to wooden clogs known as Khráv and the ladies were used to straw sandles called Pulhor. Hindus do not go into their kitchens with their footwears. A kashmiri lady for head-dress uses a scarf which only keeps her face open and the rest of the head is covered including the neck. Mohammadan ladies use veils also.

Houses

Due to the easy approach to forests, the constructions of houses is an easy affair. These are usually constructed of wood, stones and brick. The ceiling and roof are overlaid with rafters and in between these rafters insertion of small pieces of wood are made. Sometimes the ceiling is artistically fitted in with carved octogonal or hexagonal designs or rectangular pattern forming what is popularly known as Khutumband ceiling. The buildings are often three storeys high. In villages people live in mud huts but since their economic position is greatly improving they have started to construct better type of buildings. The roofs of these buildings are slanting to save them from collapsing during heavy snow-falls in winter. The roofs are made of birch bark with a heavy layer of earth over it. In spring these roofs are seen covered with flowers such as Red Turk's Head and Crown Imperial, Lily wild rapeseed and Lillium present a grand spectacle from a distance. In addition to ordinary shutters these houses are also provided with lattic-work windows which serve a great purpose both during winter and summer months. In summer they are kept open to admit fresh cool air and in winter kept closed to keep the rooms warm. In some of such houses bird tables are kept to feed the birds before the family have the meal. During cold winter months people live in the first storey and in the third storey in summer to

enjoy the cool breeze which plays in the higher levels of atmosphere in that season. Kashmiris use mats of bulrush to sit upon instead of tables and chair.

Language

People speak Kashur. It is believed to be an outcome of Sanskrit language which was later influenced by the language of the ruling princes of their time and by Persian during Mohammadan rule.

We may safely conclude that in the beginning of the early history the language of Kashmiris was Sanskrit. Lalishwari one of the greatest sages of Kashmir whose sayings were composed about 600 years ago are full of Sanskrit words. Even today the influence of Persian is felt inasmuch as that in ordinary course of talking Persian words are used.

Religion

Shrines are in proportion to the population. Every one has his own right of worship. There are two sects of Muslims, Shias and Sunnis. The Shias came into existence in 1486. They form about 9 per cent of the total Muslim population. They have two big mosques in the city of Srinagar besides other mosques in the valley, one is at Hassanabad and the other at Zadibal. Hindus who were converted into a minority during 14th century are worshippers of Shiva. Max Muller has remarked 'the gap left by Vedanta has been wisely filled in by the Shivism of Kashmir'. Shiva philosophy is peculiar to Kashmir. There are two hillocks Hari Parbat and Shankracharia Hill which are sacred to the Hindus and are usually visited on festival days. The earliest Muslim shrine in Srinagar is that of Shah Hamdan Mosque situated in the centre of the city. There are some Churches also for Christians to worship.

Customs

Kashmiri Pandits are divided into the two sections: Malmösis and Banamösis.

Ordinarily, Malmasis are those Hindus who live in or around the Himáláyas. Their way of reckoning astronomical intercalary month is different to that of Bánamásis who live in the plains of India and the Deccan.

There was a time in Kashmir when the population dwindled and the Brahmans from the Deccan were invited to settle in Kashmir. Those immigrants are called Bánamásis and the original inhabitants are called Malmasis.

Bán = means the Sun.

Mal = dirt that is mistake in calculation.

Hindus observe Lunar calendar for performing rites and ceremonies of their families, and Solar calendar is observed for official routine, and occasionally for rites also.

After two years and a half both calendars are adjusted. Bánamásis have one extra month and Malmasis have another extra month. No rites or ceremonies are performed in those two months. It is not auspicious.

This month is called intercalary month. Bánamásis in their own month and Malmasis in their own month go to Bawan (Martand) Spring to perform shradas to remember their dead relatives.

Hindus and Mohammadans have their own customs. But there are many points of resemblance. On marriages both sects use Mahandi dye the occasion is known as Manzirat. Both accept presents in cash which is called Gulimut (wrist kissing). Economically the people are fairly well off. There is a joint family system. Hindus generally seek employment while Mohammadans are mostly business men. Some people with

small earnings maintain their families and also reserve for their daughters marriage, almost at their cut throat, in order to keep the status. At the time of the birth of a child in the case of Hindu exact time is noted to prepare his horoscope which tells the events of his coming life. The bed on which the child is born is known as *Hurr* and the mother of the child is known as *losa*. On the 4th day from the date of the child's birth in a Hindu family sesamum fried in oil and kernels of walnut are distributed among friends and relatives. The child gets his name on the seventh day of his birth. The function is known as *sunder*. A male child is always preferred to female one. A Hindu male child after it attains four years of age is donned with holy thread and a Mohammadan male child is at that age circumcised. In a Hindu family where there occurs a birth or a death friends and relatives do not eat anything there for eleven days. Marriages of the boys and the girls are being performed after they attain the age of puberty. Marriages are being arranged by middle-men. In the case of a Hindu marriage horoscopes of the boys and the girls are compared. *Dijhoor* is the most important ornament to be weared by a Hindu bride besides other ornaments of gold. Mohammadans also use gold and silver ornaments.

While concluding I would remark that Kashmiris possess a strong character, sharp intelligence with diligence. There are some aspects which are common to all people irrespective of their caste and creed.

4. GULMARG

Gulmarg is supposed to be a corruption of Gauri Marg . . . Gauri's Meadow, the goddess Gauri being the presiding deity of a spring found in the place. Gulmarg means a flower meadow and this name was coined by Yusuf Shah, the Tsak King of Kashmir, who used to visit Sonamarg, Gurais valley and Gulmarg with his mistress Habakhutan.

It lies in the North-East of the Pantsál Range under the shadow of Mount Apharwat (13,542 ft. above sea level). Through poplar avenues and rice and maize fields we drove in a car which deposited us at the foot of the upland called Tangamarg,* 24 miles from Srinagar. Whiskered terns were hovering over the rice fields hunting for food in the water and bee-eaters and shrikes were on the telegraph wires watching the unfortunate insects which were to be their victims.

From Tangamarg two ways lead to the marg . . . one rather steep; a foot path, the other a metalled road with a gradual ascent. The road winds among the blue pines. Here and there were geraniums and dwarf lindolofia. Not very far from the road belladonna was in flower. After a walk of three and a half miles we emerge at the top into an extensive uneven plain. The huts which are generally made of planks are seen buried among the pines. Europeans and Indians come and take refuge under the pines from the scorching sun of the plains.

There is a regular bazar where everything is available. In October 1947 the frontier tribesmen (Pakistani raiders) invaded the place, burnt the huts and murders, arson and plunder took place. One finds here all the activities of civilization, which

* Derived from Tankadareni goddess who lifts Tanka weapon.

rather mar the natural beauty of the place. A large number of jungle crows will be seen busily feeding their young. Green-finches and Gold-finches are seen in swarms in the summer months. The excursionist has ample opportunity to spend his time in the side valleys. For a day's trip he can go to Khellan-marg which is 4 miles from Gulmarg and lies at the foot of Apharwat. The path from Gulmarg passes through blue pines and silver firs with an under growth of Viburnum nervosum (Kulim) and Skimma laureola (patōr), the leaves of which are sold in winter in the town as a substitute for flowers in religious ceremonies.

Khellan Marg

From Gulmarg to Khellan-marg there is an ascent of about 2,000 ft. in four miles. The path on either side is strewn with flowers. The leaves of the primulas give an idea of the charming beauty the flowers of these plants must possess in early spring. The Geraniums and Salvia hians of stunted growth raise their beautiful heads above the green verdure. The modest forget-me-nots peep out from beneath huge fallen firs to take the wayfarer by surprise. Black crested tits and Willow warblers chirp brightly among the trees, while the Streaked la[illegible]h-ing thrushes fly to and fro in the bushes with raised tails. T[illegible] call of a Cuckoo can also be occasionally heard.

We came to the Marg. It is a flat piece of land above t[illegible] tree region. It is covered with a plant (Euphorbia Thomsonian[illegible] yielding a milky juice). It is called hirb in Kashmiri and [illegible] used as medicine by the natives. The Marg stretches as [illegible] [illegible] the foot of Apharwat. The slopes of this mountain are [illegible] [illegible]overed here and there with juniper, rhododendron and alpi[illegible] flowers. There is also a grove of birch trees. We found [illegible] strange kind of willow which creeps along the ground an[illegible] never gr[illegible] to a height. Following the Poonch road, we mad[illegible] short [illegible] through mountain spurs till we ros[illegible] to the plate[illegible]



GULMARG



Photo by Mr R. D. Thompson

HUMPET VALLEY



Photo by M[illegible] R. D. Thompson

KANITAL

and leaving the rocky surface on our right and turning a little to the left we rose higher again and saw the coloured gems of nature rearing their heads among the stones. We gathered some flowers for pressing. We ascended another ridge which led us to the precipitous bank of a lovely tarn with milky blue water, covered in two places with ice. This lake is called Alapathör (12,600 ft.). We ascended the highest peak of Apharwat (13,542 ft.) to have a look at another small lake, the whole of which, except a small portion, was covered with snow. Here we found on sandy soil a plant called Paraquilegia. One can see clearly the watershed between the Ningal, the Bonyar and the Ferozpore Nalla. We saw a moving speck on a distant ice-bed and the coolie told us that it was a bear.

We descended to the Alapathör lake where some of us had a swim. It reminded me of Mr R. D. Thompson and his party swimming in Tar-Sar (12,800 ft.). There were some visitors from the plains on the lake. They were invited to join us. But they shivered and remarked, 'Well, if we go in, who will carry home our dead bodies?' We had a hailstorm which lasted for a few minutes. The beach of the lake was covered with Saxifraga flagellaris and Androsia. A Rock chat was heard singing on the other side of the lake.

If you speak loudly it creates an echo and the valley resounds. How I wished Col. G. B. Sanford, the expert musician, could have played on his violin here rather than at Geneva; the whole [illegible]ace would have been turned into an orchestra!

On returning we passed over several snow beds at the foot of which we found several flower beds of Cremanthodium decaisnei, Tibetica mertanisa and Primula elliptica. We sat down to have a view of the plain and mountains beyond. The valley lay in calm repose wrapped in a green sheet of rice fields, embroidered with brown patches of wudars (alluv[illegible] [illegible]lateau) and fringed with poplar avenues [illegible] perfect order. [illegible] the hazy background

rose the huge towers of nature emerging from the mist as the mountains of another world.

On the North stood the impregnable peak of Nanga Parbat (26,696 ft.) the Lord of mountains and the fourth highest peak in the world, like a crystal cone against the azure blue sky. On the east in a straight line with the Hari Parbat Fort rose the Kolahoi (Gásha Brari-goddess of light) 17,779 ft. like a finger pointing towards infinity, while in between the two the Harmoukh (Hara, the dispeller of afflictions, moukh-face) 16,890 ft. lifted its flat peak, white on the north and brown on the south. How one would like to pass all one's days amid these scenes, of course when it is not raining!

A legend says that Harmoukh (male was higher than Kolahoi female) who told Harmoukh that she would marry him provided he grew shorter of stature. Love is blind. He did so, but, alas, the hard-hearted bride refused to marry him and now raises her haughty head over the suppressed peak of Harmoukh.

We descended over the slope bedecked with beautiful flowers. We found here wild ash and rhododendron. We halted for some time at Khellenmarg near a fresh water spring. A number of Kestrels was hovering over the slope and several Meadow buntings flew from side to side. The whole view disappeared in clouds which the setting sun turned from snow-white to blazing gold.

5. TOSA MAIDAN

An alpine meadow

What a joy it is when one gets relieved from official routine and spends a longed for vacation in an Alpine meadow. There one finds himself in direct touch with Nature, outside the pale of artificial civilization. The rushing torrents, with redstarts, dippers and wagtails, the lofty pines with tits and finches; the verdant mountain slopes covered with gentians, geraniums and geuins; the rocks with sedums, saxifrages and blue poppies—these are the books wherein one traces the skilful hand of the Great Power which sustains the universe.

It was on such an occasion that we arranged to have an expedition under the auspices of the Natural History Department with a small party of boys and masters. We engaged 2 tongas and came to Mágám. The crops in many places were very bad on account of the drought. There were cracks in the fields and the paddy ears were withered. We heard the Tickell's thrush and tits in the poplar avenues. We turned to the left from Mágám and crossing over an alluvial plateau came to a village called Batapor. We stayed there for two days. One day while having breakfast we heard that some one had fallen from a tree. We ran to the rescue and saw an old women of sixty who had climbed up a tree to get leaves for her sheep. She missed her footing and fell to the ground, leaving her headgear sticking to a branch of the tree. She was badly hurt. One of us picked her up and carried her to her home.

We then made arrangements to go to Tosa Maidan. On August 7th we started through a ravine which the villagers called Gogaldara, a mispronounciation of Kokadar Dwara.

Kokadar is the name of a peak in the Pantsál Range and Dwara means a gate. It is through these gates that invaders used to enter Kashmir.

We passed through fields of maize and came to a path which turns to the right and makes a circuit of the Poshkar ridge, sacred to Hindus. A small stream flows by and plumbeous redstarts and forktails were disporting themselves among its shady nooks. Simila streaked laughing thrushes and grey tits flitted in and out of the bushes.

There is a forest ranger's hut at Anzor under huge fir trees and not very far from a spring of fresh water. This slope is covered with an undergrowth of Vibernum nervosum and Skimmia laureola, and here and there geraniums showed their beautiful heads. What a joy one experiences when walking under lofty pines, drinking in the exhilarating breeze, listening to the sweet music of birds and looking at the charming flowers.

We spent the night at Donwör—a glade like Zaiwan in the Sind valley. Here there were temporary Gujar sheds. These people come from the villages in the summer with their buffaloes and cows. They never allow any one to pitch a tent near their hut for fear of the evil eye. We did not like to go near them on account of the unpleasant smell.

Here in this forest the Gujars had arranged to give religious education to their children. They had employed a Molvi (Mohammadan priest) who was given free rations and 25 paise per boy. The number of boys was 20. The boys were taught to learn the Quran by heart without understanding its meaning.

We started from Donwör at 8.15 a.m., and the Sun of 8th August was veiled with clouds. We hoped to find a shepherd at Brari Pather but none was there, so we left for Yenga Pather. We had to find our own way through rank vegetation; the rain was pouring down and it was very courageous for a boy of ten

to walk over these slopes. A little higher the whole place was covered with various kinds of asters and several plants of Saussurea lappa (Kuth).

We arrived at Rachi Parhan at 11.45 a.m. and took shelter in a shepherd's hut. The sky cleared. The view was magnificent. The whole valley was at our feet spread like a carpet with mosaic work of green fields and uncultivated patches. The Wular Lake looked like a silver sheet at the end of the carpet. Most charming was the view of Nanga Parbat (26,696 ft.). The Nanga Parbat Range is the ninth from the Tragabal pass (10,000 ft.).

We started from Pachi Parhan at 1.30 a.m. The ascent was steep. The mountain was covered with birch trees, rhododendrons and junipers. At about 3.30 p.m. we reached Nakawör Pal (the nostril rock) 14,000 ft. It is said that during the Deluge or when Kashmir was a lake, the boats used to be moored round this rock. It is the highest peak in this part of the range. The view of the mountain ranges round the valley was glorious. We descended from here over the meadows and velvety slopes into Pehajan (13,000 ft.). This valley is surrounded by hills clothed with green slopes. There are no trees but juniper bushes and out of these aquilegia. Codnopses ovata and aconitum showed their beautiful heads.

There is a kind of medicine made out of the flowers of Chasmanthum aconitum. One part should consist of flowers and two parts of sugar. It is kept in a closed jar for forty days in the sun. It is believed to be a strong tonic and a cure for rheumatism and general debility. The dose should not be bigger than a small pea; a larger one is poisonous.

We found here several plants of artemisa, which also grows plentifully in the Gurais valley.

A tiny stream flows out of this valley from underneath the boulders. The stones are smooth and it was probably at one

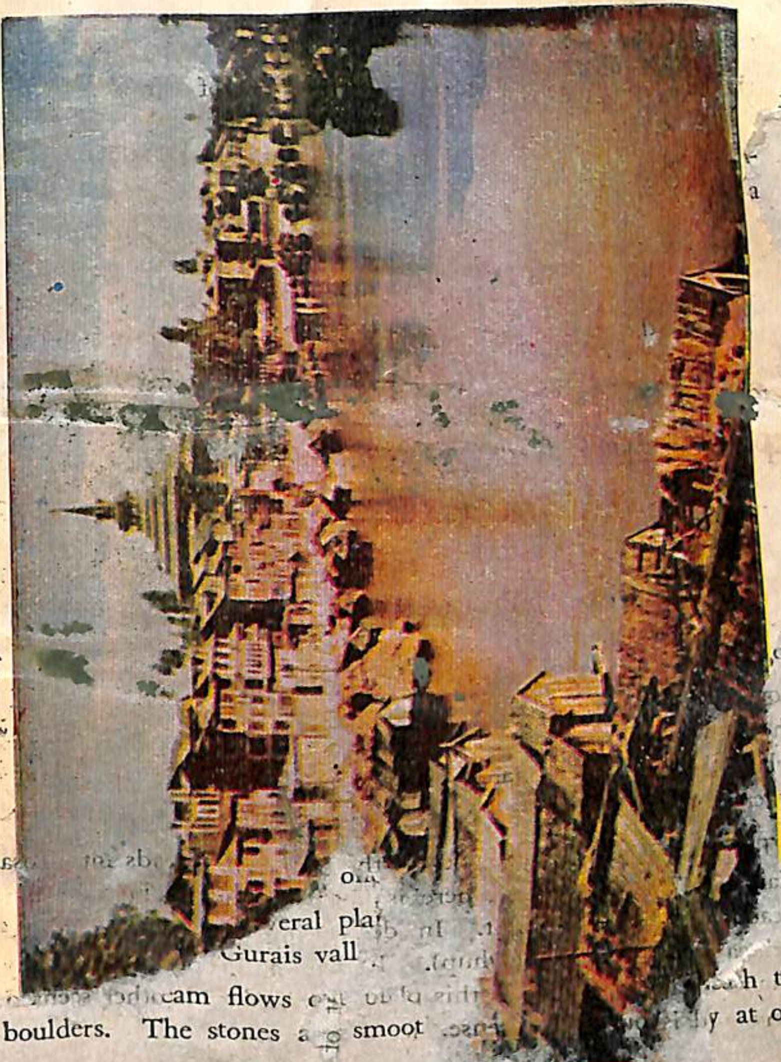
time the bed of a glacier. There were about 25 shepherd huts, of which 20 were inhabited. Th villagers entrust their flocks to one of their member whose family has followed this calling from time immemorial. He takes them to these meadows for July, August and September. His remuneration from the villagers is six seers of rice per sheep and a share o various products from their fields at the end of autumn. The villagers pay one isit to their flocks when in the meadows and provide them ith salt.

We saw shepherds sleeping outside their sheds under a single blanket, although the wind at these latitudes is very frosty and chilly. They always count their flocks in the morning when they take them out and in the evening when they get them back in the fold. In spite of that a shepherd told us that he had been robbed of twenty sheep.

We saw jungle crows, kestrels, wagtails, a pair of doves and a small black eagle. This place resembles Sekiwas but is less windy. We spent a glorious time there.

The path to Gulmarg branches off here. We left on the morning of Wednesday the 9th August. The aconitum on both sides of the pass was in full bloom, and reminded us that otpheajan is a rich and verdant defile. The slopes were vered with swertia and primula which were in seed. Directly e snow melts this place must be like a celestial flower garden hen swertia and primula are in full bloom. The roots of w tia petiolata (mumrán) are used as a medicine for the eyes.

he Basmai Galli (13,000 ft.) is ass which lea into Tos idan. The view from h grand. The extensive dows came into sigh the pass we found macrocephala (D ly lobed ashy leaf. The root of rain burnt as incen ten



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Nág. We found out from the shepherds that Nila Nág was about 15 miles from Tosa Maidan.

We descended through pines and firs, glades and thickets, amidst geraniums and dandelions (wanhand) over the pony track at the foot of the mount, whence maize fields and Gujar houses came in sight. About 5.30 p.m. we came to the bridge which crosses over the Sukh Nág canal and goes to Arzal. We stayed here for some time to see the logs dashing against one another when floating from the forest area towards the city.

We asked some villagers how far Nila Nág was. They answered seven miles. Beyond the bridge the road branches off, one part through the forest and the other through the villages. We went along the forest road. If the condition of the peasantry is to be judged by buildings, the peasants on this side are more prosperous than those on the Khág side. We kept on walking but did not reach any particular place. Every time we asked a peasant how far Nila Nág was, we received the same answer, seven miles. Even after trudging along till sundown the seven miles grew no shorter. We stayed for the night in a shop.

These villages are near the head waters of Sukh Nág canal, hence the crops are luxurious and aqueducts are fringed with willows, balsams and Achhilum millifolium. (Pahal gása.) The villagers buy the necessaries of life in exchange for the products of their fields. Snuff, tobacco and tea are consumed in large quantities. They inhale snuff and rub their teeth with it.

The next day was Friday and on that day the shopkeeper had to climb high up to the meadows to buy butter which he got at a very cheap rate. Shopkeepers made women take an oath not to sell butter to any one. I remember when we were in Kolahoi in 1925 with that wonderful mountaineer Mr R. D. Thompson, who climbed a height of 17,000 ft. on a crutch and one leg, we offered money to the Gujars for butter, but they would not sell it. The head of the family was not present when

the family took this oath of allegiance to the shopkeeper and so he was able to sell us some.

We left the place early in the morning and crossed over an alluvial plateau to a village where we found a Patwári (revenue clerk) who received us kindly and told us that Nila Nág was nine miles away. So seven miles in one day became nine miles with compound interest.

We had our meal and in the afternoon the Patwári gave us a guide to lead us to Nila Nág. There the Rev. Canon and Mrs Tyndale-Biscoe received us with parental love.

Nila Nág

Nila Nág (Blue Spring) is a secluded and quiet place in Gogji Pather village. It is not a spring but a lake about 40 ft. deep. It has no outlet. An old villager told me that his grandfather remembered the time when the earth shook and a thunderbolt fell and thus gave birth to the lake. There are still stumps of old pines left in it. He also told me that several times he had seen demons and spirits in the form of crocodiles and snakes in the lake, and the people who lived near kept at a safe distance. Since the time Dr Neve and the Rev. Canon C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe made their summer huts on its bank and made it an annual resort, all these demons had disappeared and we now ventured to go near it.

In the by-gone days this place was haunted by bears and a panther. The panther ate almost every dog in the village close by and was now trying to get the Canon's dog. The Canon had several encounters with it. One day he loaded his gun and put a goat as bait in a large wicker basket and then waited for the panther. While the Canon was lying in wait for the panther, the latter was stalking him from the rear.

On another occasion the Canon invited a friend of his, an expert, hunter: to bag the panther. But this time also the

panther fooled him. He found out by the pug marks on the snow that the beast was chasing him.

It was night. The Canon was coming with his two little children from the village to his hut. On the way he saw two glittering eyes and presently came face to face with the panther. The Canon looked straight into the eyes of the panther. The panther twice bowed its head before the Canon and then sprang away into the forest. Even lower animals pay respect to a great soul. For twenty years the beast roamed at large and was finally found dead in one of the ravines.

Several people who were learning swimming in the lake have been saved from drowning. Among them was Miss E. Newman who spent her life for the good of Kashmiri women and built a beautiful hospital for women at Rainawari—a haven of rest—but it was only used as a dispensary until established by Dr J. E. Vaughan. Dr B. M. Smyth was incharge for some years. It was the only Christian Hospital in Kashmir, which has now been taken over by the Government on November 14, 1970, the birthday of late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and has been named after him.

We spent the night at Nila Nág and left in the morning thanking the Canon and Mrs Tyndale-Biscoe for their kindness. We came to Nágám where there is a dispensary. In the afternoon we engaged a tonga and came to Srinagar to resume our work with renewed vigour.

6. SOME VALLEYS AND PEAKS OF THE PANTSAL RANGE

Blessed is the country surrounded by mountains which bestows on her inhabitants no small amount of pleasure and happiness. The side valleys concealed among them vie with the garden of Eden in beauty.

We started on August 3rd, from Srinagar in a lorry. It drove through a poplar avenue out-side Ram Bagh which was the cremation ground of the Maharajas of Kashmir. A few gypsies had adopted settled life near the road. Wahathor is a village known for clowns.

The road was unmetalled and some of the bridges were not suitable for wheeled traffic. We were obliged to stop about two miles on this side of Nágám (New village) in a willow orchard. When the whole party had arrived we examined the pony backs and loaded them. It is now a metalled road.

At noon we started. Several flocks of pigeons and jackdaws were eating grain in the mown wheat fields. Chickory (wan hand) showed its blue head from the rice fields. A stream called the Apözyaren (female liar) flowed by several villages. There were several pear and apple orchards near the road. In a hole in the middle of a precipice was the chick of a vulture. The nest was covered with white waste. We arrived at about six p.m., at Nila Nág, described elsewhere. We were most kindly received by our friends. Some of us bathed in the lake which beautifies the forest. We found three nests of the whistling thrush on a rafter in Rev. Canon C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe's hut, exactly over Mr Jacob's bed. We saw also several kites moulting their feathers in their wings and tails.

Lovely was the walk through pines with Viburnum nervosum (Kulim) undergrowth. The smell in the air was refreshing.

that boats were moored at these rocks. It was a nice site for a camp. Some islets in the middle of the stream were covered with sweet scented yellow Corydalis and the bank with red Polygonum (möñtsaran). The path on the right goes over to Katsa Gol Pass (14,000 ft.). We took the left course, leaving the boulders and walking over grassy patches. We found several beds of Asters, Mertensia tibetica, the scented Chorispora sabulosa, Saxifraga sibirica and Sedum. At 10 a.m. we came to a snow bed where we had our breakfast. A little higher, right at the foot of the mountain, is a tarn called Makör Sar (defiled lake). Round here, Sassurea sacra (Jog Pādshah) grows.

The snow over the glacier had begun to thaw. Slowly and steadily, we climbed the steep side of the glacier which had very few crevasses—being the northern aspect of the mountain. There were lines and one or two crevasses not more than a foot wide and shallow. When we neared the saddle we saw the advance party crawling along the ridge of Makör Nág Peak—a minor peak which they mistook for Romesh Thong (Sunset Peak). Mr Jacob shouted to them and said that the Canon had told him that the peak on the right was the highest one, so they descended. We all met at the col.

While resting, I saw something shining like Jupiter in the middle of some dark blue stones. On closer examination, to my great joy, I found Sassurea sacra (Jog Pādshah) the king of saints. It was like a cotton ball, in the centre were violet fibres and round about was a rosette of leaves. The plant was about 6 inches high between two slabs with very little earth. The root was not very deep.

We climbed the ridge along the edge of the ice over shale and scree. Higher up it was an easy walk to the top of the peak. It was 2.30 p.m. The Punch side was a sheer precipice. This was Romesh Thong (Sunset Peak).

This peak was first climbed by Dr Neve. It catches the last rays of the setting sun, hence its name. Dr Duke, in his 'Guide to Kashmir', regrets its English name. As the peak lies exactly at the source of the Romesh, hence called Romesh Thong (Peak). Fog hid the charming view from us.

We began the descent. The glacier by this time was full of life. There were arteries in the form of rills flowing over the blue ice. It was difficult and treacherous to walk over such ice. We managed to zig zag across it till we reached terra firma. We noticed scratches and smooth surface of the stones, which proved that the glacier once filled the valley lower down but now had receded.

There are a number of tarns. The water of these tarns and the glacier form the source of the Romesh which joins the Jhelum (Vetasta) near Sangam. There is a pass which goes to Rajauri. Walking over grassy moraines instead of following the lead of the guide, we had an easy walk round the knolls and by 7.30 p.m., had neared the camp which was far away from the main mound. We had walked for 13½ hours. In the evening we learnt that two ponies had died. The ponymen were of opinion that these ponies had eaten Aconitum chasmanthum (Mohand) and this had poisoned them. This plant was to be seen all over the valley.

The morning of August 7th was foggy. One vulture visited the carcasses in the morning. In half an hour about 90 vultures gathered. It was an interesting sight to see them alighting, lowering their necks, walking in a majestic way, or hopping as if a heavy load had been laid on their shoulders. The griffon would drive away any smaller ones, and when it was away with its wing stretched out as if at attention, others would come to the feast.

It was a problem for Dig (the name of the pi-dog which followed us from Duragdolan). The dead ponies were in two

Slowly and steadily walking over the ice, we at last came to the pass. We judged from here that the peak could be gained. There was another peak like a slab standing erect with a gap separating it from the main peak. Below the col to our right was a tarn, which gave rise to the Shala Ganga.

All along the col to our great joy we found a large number of Sassurea sacra flowers (Jog Pādshah). Some of them were fairly big and charming to look at. In fact all along the range from the Sunset peak to Tatakoti this flower is sure to be found high above the snow line. It is much coveted by mendicant sadhus who know its various uses for different kinds of disease. The pappus boiled in milk is believed to give relief from fever and other ailments. Those who know these uses are loth to tell the secret to others. Money-making by this means they abhor.

We refreshed ourselves at the col. The climb from here was very steep. The shaly bits were loose. Of course there were rocks which afforded a hand hold. Precipitous were the slopes on our right and left. We took off our footwear and climbed bare-footed. Sedum crassipes and sacras were here and there. Steadily on all fours we gained the summit. It was 10.30 a.m. We found a cairn, probably erected by the survey party of India. Opposite to this we built another to commemorate the ascent of C.C. Club.

What a delight to rest against a rock in the rarefied air beyond man's civilization, surrounded by the five elements, gazing at the Almighty's wondrous handi-work. Man and Nature blend into eternal bliss. Such occasions are rare to find.

On the south the plains were filled with a sea of fleecy clouds as far as the horizon, to the west was a row of peaks no less than fourteen from the Sunset Peak, (Romesh Thong) rising like beacons in a sea, while glaciers between the peaks shone like the crests of sea waves. In the trough were the tarns, like

jewels in rings, giving rise to the perennial rivers to irrigate the thirsty plains. Such is Himalayan beauty.

'All that is beautiful comes from the highest beauty which is God'.

Lest the clouds should envelop us we began to retrace our steps. We reached the col where we put on our shoes. With sure steps turning round a ledge we came to the glacier. By this time the sleet had begun and small rills were flowing over the ice. A pair of red billed chough (Wan Kaviñ) were sitting high up among the crags in their cosy nest, cawing all the time we walked over the glacier. It was unusual for them to see in their domain strangers soiling the silvery shining surface of the glacier. We were friends not foes. We also whistled and cawed, but alas! we could not understand each other. How often bickerings arise as the result of misunderstandings!

The glacier was on the northern slope, hence the crevasses were small. Without any mishap we reached the shale and firm rocks, some of which were fringed with pink polygonums. Over the rocks and rivulets, over the moraines and meadows we reached the camp at 2.30 p.m.

In the afternoon the clouds began to gather and covered the valley. The bleating of the sheep, the loud calls of shepherds hastening to shelter under rocky caves, and the pealing of thunder were the sounds that broke the silence of the valley. The rain poured down.

The sky was cloudy next morning and it began to drizzle. We had planned to go to Tosa Maidan, which is two stages across Chánz—a knoll of mount Shenkar Bulbul. The middle stage is Doorn. Bad weather and our anxiety about Mr Eric's health made us abandon our programme. In the afternoon we removed our camp to Ludra Mar. Through meadows and glades

separated by fringes of pines we passed, picking fresh mushrooms (hedar) on our way. In about 2 hours' time we covered about 6 miles, the rain pouring hard. Ludra Mar is an undulating meadow. No stream drains it. The shepherds have dug aqueducts for some miles, which water the place. There were about 20 huts, some of which were well swept inside. This is the base camp for shepherds looking after the flocks at Sangi-safed. Every morning the sturdy wives of these shepherds bring food to their husbands from a distance of 6 miles. They believe that if women stay in the Sangi-safed valley, they will either be carried off by the fairies or the fairies will haunt them. They talk of the time when neither fowl nor mutton nor garlic was cooked there. They quoted instances when their uncles had been carried away and left after some days in a certain place semi-lunatics. Some such lunatics had been restored to normal health by the priests. But I think if Mrs Eric had been with us, she would have proved too strong for all the fairies.

On the morning of 11th August we struck our tents. Descending lower down from meadow lands we entered the tree belt. It was one of the most lovely walks of our trek. The forest was fairly dense. The undergrowth was not sparse. The Prasnág stream flowed lower down into the Dud Gangá. Charming were the orange alder berries. We found here another species bearing scarlet red berries. A friend of mine made several bottles of jam from these berries.

At Charge we met a fairy in the form of a Gujrani (herdswoman) who set us on the right track. She called one of us 'King' and asked for bakshish. We revisited Yus and in 5 hours' time we arrived at Nila Nág, where we heard that Mr Eric had developed typhoid and was a patient in the Nursing Home in Srinagar. He was there for 3 months. Thank Heaven, he recovered and went to New Zealand to recoup.

7. KONSAR NAG LAKE

(Vishna Pad)

The second expedition under the auspices of the Cashmir Climbing Club had for its objective a high altitude lake in the Pantsál Range. The party left at mid-day on the 13th of July. At Pámpor we turned towards the east over the metalled road. Here the fields on either side of the road were parched for want of rain. The linseed and the cotton fields were in flower. Beyond Pulwáma which is the chief town of the district, water is plentiful, so the rice fields were luxuriant and the villages surrounded by trees. In three hours we arrived at Shupyian. It is a fairly large town and an important centre of trade. It lies at the foot of the pass which leads into the plains. It was here that the last Pathán Governor of Kashmir, Jabár Khan was killed by the Sikhs, who were invited by Bir Joo Dhar to put an end to the tyranny of the Patháns.

About a mile from the town there is a spring near the foot of a plateau. It is sacred to the Hindus. There is a fixed day early in August when they remember all children who have died during the year throughout the province. This spring is called Kapála Motsan.

We met here some old boys, a judge, a police officer and some of other professions. The first mentioned was of great help to us in procuring ponies for our luggage.

The birds noticed were sparrows, jungle crows, skylarks, goldfinches, sand pipers, bushchats, and cuckoos.

Next morning the sky was partially clouded. We moved our camp to Kungawaṭan. The path led through pines and in many places it was very bad. To attract tourists to this part

Jacob's ladder and thyme peeped at us. The path by the right bank is nearer but over boulders, by the left it is longer and smoother. The last 200 ft. of ascent gave us a hard struggle. What a reward we enjoyed from the top of the plateau! The distant Brahma Shakri peaks with serrated edges, are draped in a silvery white snowfield and at their feet lies the gleaming turquoise blue lake tapering to the south-east, closely surrounded on the east and west by mountains with almost precipitous slopes. The small floating icebergs enhanced the beauty of the lake. Every atom here manifests the glory of the Great Power upholding the universe. One would think that man's selfish nature would melt away into selflessness and thus change our planet into a paradise.

We found a small plot where we could pitch our tents. There were neither trees nor bushes, so we had to send ponymen lower down to fetch fuel.

The lake is fig shaped. It stretches from north-east to south-west. The greatest breadth is about ¾ of a mile and the length is about 2 miles, the depth is more than 150 ft. A certain American professor once came here to ascertain the depth to which ultraviolet rays can penetrate, 10,000 ft. above sea level. He adjusted his machine with proper screws and placed it in the centre of the lake. The screws somehow became loose and part of the machine sank, so the experiment was not successful.

The north-eastern shore has some inlets, one of which is considerably broader than the others. The lake becomes narrower and narrower till it ends in a point towards the southwest. Hence the man who first visited it called it Vishna Pád (Vishnu's foot). It is also called Konsar Nág.*

We launched on it a rubber canoe which Mr E. D. Tyndale-Biscoe had brought from Srinagar. It took 2 people at a time and was propelled with double paddles. To overturn or spring

* From Karamsaras (foot lake).

a bad leak meant certain death. No external help could come and the strongest swimmer would have been paralysed in this icy water above 12,000 ft. The canoe enabled us to survey every nook and corner of the lake. How our old friend, the Rev. R. D. Thompson would have enjoyed it!

When the bakörbáns (goatherds) come here, they sacrifice a goat, and the skin and the head of it they throw into the lake. If the skin moves round the lake and sinks in the middle, they believe that the offering is accepted by the god of the lake.

They do not bathe in the lake. Mr Jacob offered a prize to any goatherd who would swim to an iceberg a few yards distant. After much hesitation one daring spirit was successful. Some were given joy-rides in the canoe. The offer of a rupee tempted an old woman to risk her life. By these means we did much to dispel the haunting dread of the lake from their minds.

On the northern side there is a subterranean passage through which water is seen and heard gurgling down towards Kashmir. Similarly it is believed that water flows underground towards the plains. No glacier feeds the lake, but there are snowfields and snowbeds which discharge water into it. The amount of water which flows out of the lake appears greater than it receives. There must undoubtedly be springs in it.

In the afternoon of July 16th some of us climbed a mountain-side to have a view of the lake. The valley towards the north-west was covered with small snowbeds or denuded slopes, and yellow-coloured beds of Draba alpina dotted the green patches of grass.

On the afternoon of July 17th two parties started to climb to different passes, one led by Mr and Mrs Tyndale-Biscoe, the other by Mr Jacob and the Headmaster. The first party traversed a snowfield and witnessed from the snow-covered pass a plain densely wrapped in fog. The other party found a pony track

with moderately difficult ups and downs over the shale. The last couple of hundred yards covered with snow and very steep was rather difficult.

A slip meant a fall of several dozen yards to the snowfield below. It is the general pass by which the Gujars bring their buffaloes from the plains for the summer grazing. It must be a strenuous task to bring such a big heavy animal over such a height and slope. They employ coolies, eight men to each buffalo and one by one they steer the animal over the pass.

We could see from the top the fog rising towards us. We felt with one side of our faces the warm wind of the plains and with the other the cold wind of the Kashmir valley. The contact of the two aerial currents covers the plain with fog. It is said that Lahore can be seen from here on a clear day. One of us remarked that the smoke from the railway engines hid the plain from our sight. In the afternoon it is always foggy. We found several clusters of Paraquilegia caespitosa among crevices in the cliffs, Saxifraga flagellaris and Mertensia tibetica.

Men from the plains arrive here in two days and with buffaloes in 10 days. The pass is called Yechini. It took us 3 hours from the camp to the top. On the way down we enjoyed some glissading. Lovely was the view of the lake with its various shades of colour. The reflection of the distant snowy peaks in the centre of the lake at sundown convinces the goatherds that a golden temple is buried there. A stream flows out of the lake. It has dug out a deep gorge about 7 miles long during about several million years.

The morning of 18th July found every trekker equipping himself for the day's march. We left the camp at 5 a.m. We took the north-western track round the lake. Leaving a heap of boulders we came to a goat-track. In some places the land-slides had made even the goat-track almost impassable. The path ran high up on the steep side of the mountain. At the

foot lay the deep cold lake. So a slip meant death as no aid was possible. Swimming in the icy cold water was out of the question. The vanguard cut steps with ice axes. Some parts were fairly covered with alpine flowers, Jurinea macrocephala (dhup) being very common. The Macrotomia Benthami (kahzabán) was also found. All reached the other side in safety and waited there for Mr. Jacob and the Headmaster who had avoided the dangerous path by crossing the lake in the canoe. The valley ascended from here. There were several temporary sheds of Gujars here. Some of them were Hindus who were vèry hospitable and refused money for the food and drink they supplied. They had come from Reasi and Rambán for the summer months with their flocks and herds. A stream from the snowfields empties itself into the lake. On an island of debris in a sea of snow we sat down to have breakfast. We saw in the centre of the valley a big cylindrical fossil, probably the trunk of a tree with annual rings on the side.

The party was divided into groups under a leader who was given an ice-axe and a rope. To attack the mountains from the valley side was almost impossible. We decided to go first to the pass and then along the ridge and thus reach the summit. The snow was everywhere. We could see a labyrinth of mountains from the Koñsar Nág pass (14,000 ft.) and a small tarn on the other side. We scrambled over the serrated ridge and sat down on a peak till one of us surveyed the place. Several rock pigeons flew out of a cliff. Round the peak we found potentillas, sedums and Mertensia tibetica. To cross from one peak to another was difficult. Steps were cut with ice axes and a rope was tied from one end to the other till the party had crossed like the monkeys of the South American forests. Some of the party descended over a steep ravine and loose stones, glissading where the snow came down into the valley. They saw Mr Jacob and the Headmaster ascending the pass. The

8. THE LIDDER AND THE SIND VALLEYS

This trek was organised by Mr R. D. Thompson. The aim of the trip was to acquire geological, ornithological and botanical information of the places we visited.

We left Srinagar on July 22nd. Here and there the sky was covered with clouds. The sweet twitter of the bulbul and the melodious song of the Tickell's thrush was heard among the poplar avenues. At Latipor we saw a griffon vulture hovering over a carcass. On the way, in olden times, there were fruit gardens where the travellers would eat fruits free of cost. It has given rise the names of some villages. Tsera wön (the orchard of apricots) ör wön (the orchard of plums). There are fruit gardens even now, and they bring hundreds of rupees to the owners, but the plucking of fruit is a crime. At Anantnág the driver seemed unwilling to go on. After some altercation with him we engaged a tonga and removed a part of the load from the lorry.

We had our lunch near a sweet water spring on this side of Aker. The driver seemed to be expostulating when the car stopped two miles further on. It did not start again.

The road goes along the Shah Kul and the view of the valley on our left is magnificent. The road crosses the canal at Ganishpor sluice. Further on, there is a rock in the Lidder covered with red lead and dedicated to Ganish. The rest of the party had engaged another lorry which was going down to Srinagar and they passed us here in great style.

It was very late—9.45 p.m. when I arrived in Pahalgám. Among bushes and in darkness, I could not find my way to the camp. Somehow, I managed to employ some seven coolies

for the luggage but there was no light to guide them. An old student came out with a lantern and guided us to the camp.

Pahalgám (the village of shepherds) lies in a defile. The silvery foaming Lidder* hastens down to meet the Vetasta, leaving the flat part on the left and eroding the mountain on the right. At Mámál, on the opposite side of Pahalgám there is an old temple and a spring.

We saw a whistling thrush coming down and kissing her young one which had been caged by a bird-fancier. Besides the whistling thrush we saw black bulbuls, mynas, jackdaws, black crested tits, meadow buntings, wagtails, jungle crows, European rollers and of course sparrows.

July 24th. The road to Arau runs along the mountain slope. It is densely forested and is full of bird life. Down below we heard the music of the rushing torrent. On the way we observed the following birds: meadow bunting, forktail (black head, long heavy tail) and heard the sweet note of the whistling thrush, the grosbeak—(black head and wings, yellow body, conical ash coloured beak), bush-chat and cinnamon-headed sparrow.

We decided to proceed to Lidderwat.† Arau consists of several grassy plateaux quite open. There we found a little colony of peasants. They must be snow-bound during the winter. From here deciduous trees become less and less and birch and fir trees come in sight.

Lidderwat is 8952 ft., above the sea-level. Here we noticed several ashy-headed wagtails, plumbeous redstarts and white-capped redstarts. We listened to the babbling of a stream which soothes all weariness.

* Corrupt form of Lambodari.

† Lambodar Waṭ, Lambodar another name for Ganish. Waṭ—a stone.

Next day some of the members started for Dudh Nág. Half a mile below the Kolahoi glacier on the left of the torrent there is a temporary colony of bakörbans (goatherds). Here we crossed the stream and asked some shepherds where the Nág was. They pointed out the direction but could not show us the way. We struck out a path for ourselves. It was very steep. We crawled like goats. We could see peak after peak, but not the Nág itself. After three hours continual climbing we stood on the shore of the Nág.

It lies on the top of a plateau 14,000 ft. high. It is circular in shape and milky in colour. On one side there is a cliff of enormous height above a glacier which feeds the Nág. On the other side there is a lovely pasture bestrewn with scented flowers and fragrant herbs of various kinds.

We had no food except the milky aqua of the spring in front of us. We had previously thought it quite near our camp. We drank the nectar of the Nág and turned to the left where we found a pony-track. It took us 35 minutes to stand on the slope overlooking the Kolahoi glacier.

It is a river of ice with rows of crags, deep fissures, and seracs. It has many colours. The stones of the lateral moraines when falling into the fissures make a thundering noise together with the water running under the glacier. The southern peak of Kolahoi, 17,779 feet, stands in the middle like a Colossus, (Kola = stream, har a wreath). The native name is Gwashibror. (Gwash = light, brör = a goddess).

The clouds were encircling us and it began to rain. We lost our way. A Gujar girl who was gathering meadow vegetables guided us and cheered us by her musical songs and led us to the right path.

In our descent we collected some flowers for pressing and some vegetables for eating. We presented a bunch of Corydalis thrysiflora to Mrs Stokoe who was camping below the glacier.

This flower is common in the glacier swamp. We observed a willow warbler on a birch tree, a yellow-tailed warbler with spots on its throat, pigeons, red-billed choughs, and the white throated dippers, raising and lowering their bodies.

Next day several Gujars came to us for medicine. To some we gave bismuth, to some purgative pills, to others quinine pills, while the treatment to the patients was either cascara or cinnamon. This proved effective in most cases.

One evening Mr. Thompson did not return at the expected time. We organised a search party with lanterns and collected several Gujars. The news spread among them that Mr. Thompson was lost. We looked here and there among the rocks. We once heard the report of the gun and afterwards found him coming down the mountain in search of the fenstalle bed. This happened on several occasions.

On July 31st we walked to the Rawal ravine to collect flowers. We saw several silted lakes at the foot of minor glaciers.

A good number of vultures was hovering over the craggy tops of the mountains and there were wagtails near the stream.

August 3rd cloudy and rainy. In the evening we had a walk to a forest nursery. We saw fresh snow on the mountain tops in the vicinity. The whole afternoon was spent in restoring peace between a Gujar and his wife whom he was beating. His guilty conscience bore the threat of punishment calmly. We made him wash his wife's feet.

Some of us remained at the camp, while the others went to have a look at the glacier. This time we did not cross the bridge but went by the left side. We came to the base of the glacier. Here the terminal moraines are composed of huge boulders. We viewed the whole glacier from the base with the colossal Kolahoi peak, 17,779 feet high, above it. The icy projection on its surface was awe-inspiring.

We descended right down over these huge boulders to have a look at the icy cave from where the Lidder rises. There we saw four English ladies, one of whom had fainted on account of the strong sun. When she recovered we had a talk with her. She remarked, 'I am wonder struck at the agility of Mr. Thompson' and indeed it was surprising how he managed to walk over these boulders. During the Great War in France he had lost his right leg from the hip and it was no joke to walk on a crutch over these boulders. Down below we saw several snow pigeons and a white-throated dipper.

On August 6th we went out for an excursion to Sona Sar (golden lake). We started at 9 a.m. We had our tea at 8.30, and took about 10 buns with us. The path runs along the Reyil ravine and turns to the right and passes into the Basmai ravine.

We saw a fox in its lair under an enormous rock. The white-backed vultures were hovering over us. The Basmai ravine opens into a small valley, probably the bed of a small lake now silted up. There was a shepherd with his flock.

Down below Sona Sar on the right the path goes over a steep slope where it is not easy for an ordinary man to pass. My pen cannot describe how this Englishman managed to get over it. My heart beat within me, lest he should slip and fall into the nallah. He took off his boots and socks, scrambled barefooted on his hands and crossed to the other side.

The flow of the Sona Sar at its outlet is very fascinating. Just as a silversmith might pour molten silver out of the crucible, in the same way the transparent water of the lake rushes down the rocks in a silvery streak. A man with the least developed aesthetic sense cannot help admiring the sublime beauty of nature. She forces her way into the mind of the onlooker.

We arrived there at 12 p.m. It is a small lake half the size of Tár Sar, lying at the base of Basmai Galli 13,885 feet high. We can see here the conspicuous beds of the Basmai anticlyne.

We ate biscuits with cooked leaves of Oxyria digyna (Tsökil). The sky grew cloudy. We left at 12.5. At 1 p.m., we had a hail storm as prophesied by Mr. Thompson who went back by the usual way, but we climbed the mountain and descended into the Kolahoi valley. At the top we could see the Kolahoi peak, an isolated lancet piercing the sky. We arrived back at 4 p.m. In the evening we witnessed an exciting bull-fight near the camp. It took place on an island in the torrent.

On August 7th Mr. Thompson went up as usual to the mountain slope to identify the fenstalle bed. He had blisters on his hands, armpits and on his foot. Rugnath and I went after him and brought back some stones bearing fossil impressions which he had found. We observed a kestrel hovering on its wings.

August 8th, the night before we examined the map of the district and agreed to go to Dudh Sar. Just as a general before attacking the enemy's lines consults the map, in the same way we always consulted the map in order to attack the place of interest in a high latitude.

Our plan of going to Dudh Sar was abandoned owing to the fact that Mr. Thompson lost his purse from his pocket the day before, when examining the bed of fenstalle. So the party determined to follow his crutch marks. We made a thorough but fruitless search for the missing purse in the bushes and long grass of the mountain slope.

We left early in the morning at 9.30 and carried some 8 buns and some potatoes with us. Mr. Thompson had his breakfast early. We wanted him to carry the tiffin with him but he refused saying that it could be sent to him afterwards.

From the base of the hill we took a different path, and came to a huge slab where a rill trickles down. Here we sat down to have our breakfast. It was 11 a.m. Mr. Thompson was in

another ravine and we followed him, beating bushes and grass on our right and left in search of his purse. When we ascended high up, Mr. Thompson waited for tiffin. There was no sign of the servant. So two of the party were sent to show the servant the path to be taken and to send him on at once.

Instead of going down they climbed to a higher peak which they thought might be an easier way and less steep. They failed to find it so. They descended towards the Sona Sar side where they had a talk with a shepherd. When they came to the camp in a round about way they learned that the servant had been sent off with the tiffin basket.

We began to climb higher and higher. Mr. Thompson felt very hungry and waited sometime for tiffin, but the servant did not turn up. From here the slope is very very steep. We climbed on all fours. Mr. Thompson moved on, on his crutch and stick, hungry and with sore hands. Still he did not lose interest in geology and examined all the stones on his right and left to identify the fenstalle bed.

When we gained the summit we wished to have something to eat. We were desirous to have tea at the top. Everything would have been right if we had carried something in our pockets. Several times we sat down to take rest. The foolish servant stayed at the foot or might have climbed one fourth of the way, but did not come to the top. The top of the whole range is like a serrated edge and a footpath goes along it. From here we surveyed Sona Sar, and the side valleys that are hidden behind the mountains. The places round here are geologically very important. The top on which we climbed is a fenstalle bed. The two other tops next to it are sandstone and slate respectively. The fenstalle bed runs in a curve along the rib of the mountains to the base. This was a geological discovery. In future I hope a section named fenstalle bed will be shown

on the next geological chart of that mountain. At the top I saw the blue-throat rockwarbler with orange body and heard its sweet twitter.

A man with an empty stomach does not fully appreciate the beauty of Nature and his temper gets irritated a bit, but we were eating, chewing and digesting the sublime natural beauty which was an antidote to our hunger.

It was 6.45 p.m. When we began to descend, we were encircled with heavy clouds and our clothes were wet.

I tied the camera with my handkerchief to my neck, N. K. girded his loins with his turban and we began to descend. The slope was very steep. We sat down on the dense herbage and began to slip on our backs, holding grass roots with our hands and feet. Sometimes our hands were scratched by thorny bushes, sometimes we caught hold of prickly shrubs and sometimes thistles pricked us through our clothes and sometimes we were stuck in slimy rills.

This was not all. In descending I was foolish enough to dislodge stones and in front of me were N. K. and Mr. Thompson. How they managed to escape being rolled down I do not know! We began to near the base. It was about 9.45 p.m. There was a pony ready to carry this wonderful Englishman to the camp.

The darkness fell and we began to grope like the blind in grass and stones. The only light which we saw was distant candles of the camp, the bright sheet of the silvery Lidder and the quartz sparkling in the stones.

We saw our coolies coming towards us with a lantern and we realized that we were once more nearing our camp. We reached our camp like fasting, weather-beaten, sunburnt, pilgrims physically tired but in high spirits.

We exchanged stories of our adventures with each other. We had our meal at 12.30 a.m. and turned in at 1.15 a.m.

August 9th was a fine day. We saw several parties of peasants coming up to these meadows with salt for the shepherds of their respective flocks.

In the evening Mr. Thompson and I went once more to have a last look for the lost treasure, the purse.

We procured 6 ponies from the Naib Tehsildar for the removal of the camp. On August 10th we left Kolahoi at 10 a.m. Above Lidderwat in the small flat glade we saw a red-flanked bush robin. Leaving Lidderwat we came to Sekiwas (place of sand). We saw some vultures and eagles. I was told that among them was a golden eagle, but I failed to identify it.

Sekiwas is a nice camping ground. It is about 11,152 feet high and therefore exposed to the wind. On the four sides there are 4 gaps between the mountains, hence the wind could be very strong. Here the wild roar of the torrent changes into the soft babbling of the stream. There are no trees. The mountain slopes look like well-trimmed velvet turf.

On the East we had a clear view of the Kolahoi peak. She is just like a bride veiling her face with clouds, waiting eagerly to marry Harmoukh her would be husband.

Here and there on the opposite side we saw only a few birch trees and juniper bushes so it was not easy to get fuel.

Next day we left Sekiwas at 9.50 a.m. The sky looked gloomy. The road goes along the side of a small torrent. The vegetation on the slopes is very poor and most mountain spurs are devoid of clay. This has been worn away by the ice which remains for a long time on the sides. The rays of the sun are less powerful on these spurs.

The call of the jungle crow, the whooping voice of the owl, and the whistle of the marmot were heard among the stones.

We had a shower of rain and it continued drizzling. Down at the foot of the Yember (the staircase of the angel of death) Pass there is a flat marshy plot.

Mr. Thompson went along the stony slope of the hill leaving the main path. This was due to the foolishness of his groom who did not tell him where to dismount and where to ride. So, going along this slope he was very tired and had his tiffin directly he descended from the stony and rocky spurs.

We reached the summit of the pass. It is 13,452 feet high. The descent is very steep. It is nothing but stones. On the left is a very steep precipice and indeed it is the staircase of the angel of death.

It is very interesting to see how the pony men help a pony in going down the pass. One holds its tail, two stand on each side and make it go down slowly. If they get safely through the pass they will offer tea in the name of Saint Kahánov* (Eleven names). On the left you will see a perpendicular precipice. Many a time ponies with loads miss their footing and fall down into the nallah like a rolling rock. There are two small lakes at its base. On the left is Kem Sar, and on the right is Yem Sar.

After crossing the pass it rained in torrents. We took shelter in a shepherd's tent. The old shepherdess was kind and gentle. She gave us all the help she could.

In such weather we left our kind hostess and walked towards Kulan. We began to see pasture lands and birch trees. The lower spurs of the Yemher are luxuriant in vegetation and look magnificent. Where we entered the Kulan forest, the coniferous belt meets the pasture belt and we saw birch and fir trees.

* Another name for Dastagir Sahib whose Holy Hair of beard is enshrined at Khánayár (Srinagar).

It began raining hard. The peal of the rolling thunder and the dazzling light of the lightning were in full swing. We were kneading mud with our feet, and our turbans and coats were dripping water. Some of us fell four times, some seven times, some managed to keep their balance and did not actually fall on the mud.

The wind blew. It did not help to disperse the clouds, but enhanced our troubles. It shook the heavy pine trees and the sheets of water poured down on us from their needles. The flowers on our left and right and the call of warblers cheered us till we reached Zaiwan. Zaiwan is a glade in the midst of the mountains. It is not flat. It is about 10,000 feet high. Here we met Mrs. Drysdale and Miss Mary Williams of California whom I had met before in the Mission School, and I had a good talk with her. She is a friend of Dr. Kate Knowles, M.D., who was a great helper of Kashmiri women.

When she saw us in this condition drenched to the skin, she offered us shelter and to some of us she gave warm restoring medicine. We told her the aim of our trip and she was much interested. She prepared hot tea for Mr. Thompson who was half an hour behind us. He had several falls and had hurt his hand. In his wet condition he entered the tent of the old lady who welcomed him heartily. Hot tea was served. He took it and thanked the old ladies.

We camped near the tent of the ladies and the first thing was to light a bonfire and crack jokes round the blazing flames. The old ladies invited Mr. Thompson to dine with them.

In the evening the ladies servant came to us and complained of headache. We gave him cascara. The next day at 5 p.m. I went to see the ladies and I told them that we had given cascara to their servant. They were surprised for they told me that he had been given castor oil by Miss Williams and fruit

salt by Mrs. Drysdale. They expected that in the morning they would find him dead. How he managed to recover is a mystery!

It rained the whole night of August 13th till 10 a.m., in the morning. We decided to go down to Kulan. We left Zaiwan at noon and came down to the forest. There was no thick undergrowth of vegetation, but only a few herbs here and there. We heard the whistling call of the bluetail ending with *chet, chet* and some melodious calls of two other birds which I could not identify. A few miles further on the undergrowth is very dense.

At the foot of Zaiwan the deciduous region begins. We crossed the Sind and arrived at Kulan at 1 p.m. It is a small village with three shops. There we halted for two hours.

The road goes along the Sind. It is well constructed. On either side there are thick bushes but no trees. From these bushes we hear the buntings and sweet call of the pale bush warbler: 'You must not mix with him, he will beat you'. Several flocks of jackdaws were seen and a jungle crow was feeding its young. It began to rain hard. After Gagangir the road is stony. It goes round a spur where the stones all along that side are very loose and in winter or in the rainy season they fall and block the road. The valley closes in. Here one looks on the ashy-headed Basmai peak with its icy ravines.

We entered the marg. It is a flat piece of land more extensive than Pahalgám or Gulmarg. The view is magnificent. It is thickly forested.

It continued raining. It was 7 p.m., when we reached Sonamarg. Our luggage was far behind us. We could not camp in the open. We had been soaked to the skin. The ponies arrived at dusk. The Postmaster received us kindly and gave us a room to stay in. Another old boy Pt. Vasadev, the Police Sergeant, heard of our arrival and he at once sent his man

to tell us that he would have dinner prepared for us. Mr. Thompson lodged in the inn and slept on the floor as his own bed was wet.

For the night we slept in one of the Post Office rooms which was full of fleas and bugs. One of us spent his whole night with forceps in his hand taking out bugs from the holes in the walls. The fleas and bugs combined their armies and detachment after detachment was sent till we were tired out. In the morning a truce was signed and we left the room and pitched our camp outside.

August 14th. We ran short of money and all our resources were exhausted. One of us went to see Miss Macdonald to whom a telegram from C.M.S. Office and a letter from Rev. J. S. Dugdale was shown. She very kindly gave us a loan of Rs. 60. In the evening Mr. Thompson himself went and thanked the lady. On the way we saw several bushchats, cinnamon-headed sparrows and various kinds of birds.

August 15th. We left for Baltal at 12 a.m. The road runs along the slope of this mountain. It is a good road and metalled naturally by falling stones. At the end of every spur in front of us we saw a high snow-covered peak. The trees on the right bank of the Sind are of stunted growth.

Here and there we could see some barley fields. The women work in the fields carrying manure to fertilize the soil while the men sit idle, looking on while their wives carry the loads. The basket rests on the women's back and is tied to her shoulder. The flow of the Sind is not so rapid here. There are groves of fir and poplar trees every now and again. Near Baltal there are several small springs. Flocks of red-billed choughs were seen feeding.

At Baltal the Amoravati (the Amar Nath stream) joins the Sind. It took us three hours to arrive here. The Dak Bungalow is on raised ground above the confluence of the two streams.

It is well surrounded by trees. Here the chirping of the goldfinches, cinnamon-headed sparrows, the orange-coloured bulfinches and the tree creepers was heard like the musical sounds of a piano.

We got up at 6 a.m., on August 16th, and started for the Zoji pass. At the foot of the pass we saw a pair of hoopoes and some doves. The road runs zigzag to avoid the abrupt steepness of the mountain. In some places the crags lie right over half way like a projecting veranda and in some places they stand like huge open doors. Most of the rocks are of slate. They are turned into clay by weathering, and the clay in course of time by the internal heat of the earth is turned into rocks, so rock and clay are interdependent. High up, the ravine is covered with ice and the Sind passes under it. The chilly cold wind blows over the pass, and the tips of our noses and ears were benumbed with cold. We walked some two miles down on the other side of the pass and saw several Tibetan peaks heavily covered with fresh snow. From here a path goes to the Amar Nath cave. Dr. Neve was the first person to find this path. We saw about 40 eagles eating a carcass.

Mr. Thompson met us at the top of the pass when we were descending. There are some good flowers here but compared with the flowers of the Dudh Nāg valley they shrink into insignificance. The vegetation owing to the scanty rainfall is very poor.

We arrived back at Baltal at 11.30 a.m. We had our tea and started back to our camp at Sonamarg where we arrived at 6 p.m.

Mr. Thompson preferred to spend the night in the Dak bungalow. This house is on a nice spot and the view is glorious. In the distance the Basmai peaks can be seen. The twitter of the finches answers the murmur of the stream. On our way

back we met the two American ladies Miss Williams and Mrs Drysdale who showed their sympathy when we were at Zaiwan.

August 17th was a fine and bright day. Mr. Thompson returned from Baltal. He pitched his tent on a plateau of Thajwās, which was Dr. Neve's favourite camping ground.

We had an evening walk towards the last plateau of Thajwās. We sat on a huge boulder in the stony glen facing the setting sun. On our left were the high naked peaks with glaciers on their sides. At our back were the fir and birch trees and on our right ashy-coloured mountain tops with needle-shaped pinnacles. The glorious sun began to hide his radiant face and the shadows on our right and left began fast to approach us, till we were in shade and we observed the last rays of the setting sun shooting into the atmosphere over the mountain tops.

August 18th was a clear day. We were pleased to see Miss Williams back from Baltal and offered her tea in our tent. She was kind enough to accept our hospitality and we had an interesting discussion with her on her projected book. Afterwards we learnt that she had a slight fall when going to Thajwās. We saw Miss Mallinson with her brother and a friend at Thajwās.

Next day we moved our camp to Gund. All the mountain slopes facing the North are densely forested. Probably the reason is that the winds saturated with moisture strike against these slopes; they are forced to rise high; when they rise they expand; their temperature decreases and they fall as rain. On the other hand the slopes facing the South are in rain-shadow. We saw several European rollers. We had heavy rainfall during the night.

On August 20th we left for Kangan. The Gujar huts were scattered on the mountain slopes amidst the maize fields. At Harganiwan there was a big rock in the Sind river dedicated to Ganish (The god who removes obstacles). At several places we

saw coolies busily engaged in separating logs from a log-jam. It is interesting to see big logs stuck on the rocks. On our way we met Dr Vosper and Mr Noble of Edwards College. At several places the cloud-bursts had brought down the sand and stones and devastated several acres of land. Big up-rooted trees showed the path of the flood. Here we found we had lost our camera.

We left Kangan on August 21st, early in the morning. The valley gets wider and wider and mountain scenery recedes gradually separation diminishes beauty while union enhances it. The ears of rice were beginning to hang down in the fields. The Srinagar birds came to meet us on the way to bid us welcome—the thrush, the bulbul, the blue kingfisher the hoopoe, the king crow and the myna.

Near the suspension bridge we saw a school boy with his satchel under his arm. One could not help thinking about school and the knowledge one acquires to impart to young souls, so that they may be as beautiful in character as the country is beautiful. When gold is in a liquid state one can mould it in any way one likes, but when it is hard it is difficult to give it a desired shape. We passed the last off-shoot of the mountain and came to Ganderbal.

It is a haven of rest. Everything seems calm and quiet like the mind of a hermit. In the presence of the calm flow of the Sind and the cool and refreshing shade of the plane trees, one could not but think of the boisterous mountain torrents, the huge boulders of the Kolahoi glacier, our crawling over the Dudh Nāg slope, the curved. fenstalle bed of the Kolahoi mountain, the transparent waters of Tār Sar, the chilly breeze of the Zoji, the dripping turbans of Zaiwan—all these things passed before our eyes.

Here I cast a look on the mountains around the valley and they seemed to me smaller and shrunk to a lower level. We engaged a boat at Ganderbal to have a look at the water birds.

The flutter of the pied-kingfisher, the swift flight of the whiskered tern, the white wings of the water pheasant, the red overcoverts of the young paradise fly-catcher, the graceful flight of the kite, all these things beautify the weedy surface of the lake. The lotus flower amid its orbicular leaves is the chief ornament of the place.

We landed at Saidah Kadal. The sky was serene. We entered the city.

9. THE CAVE OF AMAR NATH VIA PAHALGAM AND ARAU

Pahalgám is the centre of activities of visitors from the plains and is the end of wheeled traffic. The Kashmir Government is making all necessary arrangements for the comfort of tourists. A beautiful road has been constructed via Tsandanwāri (Thānin) so that a person can easily ride to the cave. Of course, some moderate ascents and descents cannot be avoided. There are a good number of paths which lead to the cave. One of the paths passes over the Har Bhagwān Ghaṭi (12,729 ft.) and this we decided to take.

The party started from Pahalgám. The path is a pony track. On either side of the path Impatiens roylei (Trul) and Stacys (mint family) were in full bloom. Under pines grew Viburnum nervosum (Kulim) and witch-hazel (Poh). On some of the former plants were found dodder (Kukilapot). It is a parasite and feeds on the plants. The plants get their nourishment from the earth and air through roots and leaves, while parasites live on plants. Probably there are two kinds of dodder (Cuscuta). One with fine yellow threads giving bead-like white flowers, the other with thick pinkish yellow threads. The other common plant was Mentha salvestris (Wena). Occasionally we heard the notes of the whistling thrush above the torrent.

It began to rain after we pitched our tents at Arau. The morning of the 21st July was cloudless. The crescent moon rested on the fir-covered peak and the sunrise on the naked tops was lovely. Arau is a quiet camping ground. I was told that there is a rock from which a seat is carved and sweet water from a springlet passes into a stone basin and flows out.

The path from here runs under huge shady fir trees. We were able to find edible mushrooms (hedar or henda) under the trees. Arisaema tortuosum (the top of this plant is like the head of a snake) and Podyphyllum emodi (wan wángun) with its red fruit, and Oxyria digyna (Tsokil) grew round the rocks. We found several varieties of Impatiens. Several clusters of blue poppies grew among round stones after we crossed the bridge at Girwad.

There is a flat spot at Gagari Pather where we had our morning meal. The mushrooms and Oxyria digyna cooked together make a good dish. In the centre of this spot was a big rock and on the top of it grew Polygonum, Senecio, Cynoglossum, Epilobium and a kind of umbelliferaea. This place was not unlike Khalan in the Lidder Valley. Towards the right bank of the stream was a small fall. We saw a slaty-blue flycatcher, a pied woodpecker and a jungle crow.

Beyond here the slopes were covered with wild dock, Jacob's ladder, Senecio, Cynoglossum, Swertia and Verbascum thapsus (Bolar Kon). The leaves of the latter plant are ground and mixed with butter as a remedy for itch. In the middle of the torrent on a big rock were four white capped redstarts moving gaily about. The bird's loud plaintive squeak *t-e-e-e-e* will at once betray it.

Armin is a flat spot and a beautiful camping ground. It is covered with Senecio chrysanthemoides (mongol), which along with dock is generally found between 9,000 and 10,000 ft., above sea level. A stream flows from the N.E. by the side of the valley and reminded us of Sang-i-safed valley. The northern aspect of mountains is covered with fir and birch, while the southern aspect owing to insolation and weathering is rocky and precipitous. There were 3 Gujar families living under rocks on the right bank and 3 Gujar sheds on the opposite side. Mountain flanks gave rise to three springs, two of which were

dry. Spring water is clearer than glacial water. A pair of grey wagtails and a whistling thrush were eating insects in the stream. It took our pack ponies 3½ hours to reach here.

On the 22nd July at dawn we saw a pair of brown dippers sitting on a boulder raising and lowering their bodies. It was very interesting to see how they dive after water insects in the rushing torrent. Their flight is straight almost touching the water, while wagtails fly in curves. A flock of the yellow-billed choughs were manoeuvring about the slope.

An ascent of about 300 ft. led us to a flat spot called Arm Pathri. The floral vegetation on our right and left was grand. There were beds of Salvia. hians, Morino longifolio, Papaver nudicaule, Corydalis thyrsiflora, which grows near water. Near lower Náfaran there is a beautiful fall. We found three Gujar sheds. The upper Náfaran is a fairly large valley where no fuel is obtainable. The mountain flanks and some snow beds give rise to the Armin stream, which joins the Lidder at Arau.

Before we ascend the pass there is a big smooth rock on the right side of the path. The slope of the pass is covered with slate, shale and scree. Among the slate we found Corydalis Govaniana and Corydalis crassifolia with 3 fan shaped thick leaves and purple flowers. The last part of the pass was a series of steps where the ponies had to be unloaded. The view from the pass was superb. Right at the foot of the pass was turquoise green Har Nág (the lake of peace) shining like a glittering eye at the head of an emerald green body. A part of the lake was silted up. Towards the N.N.E. were the snowy peaks of Bálal with glaciers between them. On the right was the Har Bhagwan peak (16,041 ft.), and on our left the Kolahoi peaks surrounded by glaciers. On the top of the pass were several plants of Potentilla curviseta.

The slopes of Har Nág (12,269 ft.) are steep, covered with Geum and Potentilla atrosanguinea. There is a pony track, but

in bad weather it becomes very slippery and dangerous. The lake appeared like a sleeping yák with its bushy tail. There was a shepherd with his flock on the lake side. He told us the following story:

Har Nág sent his son and daughter-in-law to find a spot where he could live near Kolahoi (Gwáshi-Brör). They went back and told him that there was room for them but not for him. He then sent his son-in-law, who returned with the news that there was room for his father-in-law but not for himself. So he cursed and petrified his son and daughter-in-law and made room for his son-in-law at his feet. Hence the lakelet which represents the bushy tail of the yák is called Zámtor Nág (Son-in-law spring). The two rocks towards the silted part of the lake are the petrified son and daughter-in-law.

On the first day of their arrival, the shepherds kill a sheep and cook their food in well washed utensils. Before they eat they place a dish full of cooked rice and meat on the shore of the lake as an offering to the spring deity.

We pitched our tents about 200 yards away from the lake. Marsh primula was abundant and a white breasted dipper was after its prey. This valley is full of marmots' (drins) burrows. These are as large as a big-cat and brown in colour. These animals have been found living about 9,000 ft. in dreary regions. When they hoot at intruders they stand on their hind legs and join their fore legs like a kangaroo. They are sometimes killed for their fur. The burrows are zig zag. The copper coloured lizard (tamar) is also found at a similar height. The naked peaks are the home of ibex and stags, which descend in winter and early spring.

A shepherd told us of his encounters with a brown bear, how he threw live charcoal out of a kángri in its face, and then gave it a blow on the head with an axe and found it dead three days later.

The valley is inhabited by shepherds, Gujars and bakörbáns, (goatherds). On Fridays the Gujars make milk cakes from buffaloes' milk. It is boiled and some churned milk is put in it till it turns sour. It is strained and cakes are made from the residue. Cakes are also made from churned milk, but they are thicker and not so good. The cakes are fried in oil or ghee and eaten.

The morning of 23rd July was very cold. The wind blowing over the gap and glaciers make the valley chilly. We divided our party into batches. A party started early before it thawed to survey the eastern part of the Koláhoi glacier and to see whether it would be possible to climb the northern peak. They climbed a ridge near the lake, where they found Sassurea sacra and Saxifraga Jacquemotiana. They crossed a snowfield and saw a layer of frozen hailstones 3" thick. They went as far as an icefall.

The other party swam in the Har Nág. As and piper, probably Tringa ochropus, was seen. After noon they climbed a grassy spur covered mostly with Jurinea macrocephala. They crossed the torrent flowing out of the glacier. Following the edge of the glacier, they climbed up a nallah through which they could not have descended. Continuing they reached another gentler slope from which they came down. There is a pass which leads to the Kolahoi valley. Over the pass is a beautiful view of a snow field and a lake as we were told by a bakörbán.

There were deep crevasses in the glacier and ice pinnacles projected like the door of a fort studded with iron nails. The colour of the ice was pink, the rocks were pink, the water flowing out of the glacier was also pink. So much so, that our feet were also coloured pink when we waded. Like attracts like. Epilobium latifoilum which graced the islets at the mouth of

the glacier was also pink. Several beds of Chorospora sabulosa, Marsh primula and Edelweiss we saw on our way back. Several snow pigeons and kites were hovering about.

There are no trees except a few juniper bushes. There is a track from here to Báltal and Sona Marg.

A fortnight later Mr. Jacob took a party of masters to climb Gwashi Brör (Kolahoi). They had a guide, Aziz Ganái, with them who had climbed the peak 11 times. Two members of the club gained the top after spending a night at a height of 16,000 ft.

The glow of the sunrise of 24th July on the glittering conical mountain peaks and glaciers was very attractive. A pair of brown dippers and a yellow wagtail were catching their morning meal. We left the place about 10 a.m. The lower part of the pass was grassy while the higher was shale, in which we found Androsacia, Saxifrages, Corydalis crassifolia and other Alpine flowers.

There are two paths from the top. One goes along the Har Bhagwan Galli (14,086 ft.). At Rabi Marg there is a lake on the way, where, according to the story of a shepherd one may meet fairies and hear them singing. If a person gets enamoured he loses his life. We were told that this was not a pony track. At the foot of this pass lies Astán Marg. The other route goes along Rözdön (13,200 ft.), longer but easier for ponies. We chose the latter route, not with the hope of being entangled in the meshes of fairies, but because it was an easier path.

The view from the pass was entrancing. On the north west stood the colossal Kolahoi peak like a pointed triangular prism embossed in snow, with two thumbs projecting on each side. On the south west stood the unconquered part of Shishram Nág Range with battlements and turrets of about one dozen peaks not less than 16,000 ft. with glaciers between them. The Har

Bhagwan valley appeared like a green jewel clasped by the ashy-coloured peaks, while the Astán Marg slopes were covered with fir trees.

Kolahoi is the name of the valley. It is a pity that the Europeans have given this name to the peak which retains its old name Gwashi Brör, *the goddess of light.* It catches the first rays of the rising sun, hence its name.

We descended the green slopes. The path ran round and round spurs. Trollus acculis and Swertia were very common. A flock of red-billed choughs flew over us when we sat at Dán Beran where we met a shepherd.

At the foot of the pass is Hára Wat where we met a Gujar family looking after buffaloes. The path ascends from here to Astán Marg. The route was formerly much frequented by the pilgrims from Amar Nath.

It took our ponies 8 hours to reach here. This route was 7 miles longer than the Rabi Marg route.

Astán Marg is a pent up valley. On its north west is Rabi Marg, on the east is Sása Kōṭ (13,860 ft.). Göb Dalan is the water-shed between Shishiram Nág stream and Astan Marg stream. The water flows out of the mountain flanks, hence it is transparent. Wood is available. Birch trees are in good condition. Several families of shepherds, Gujars and bakörpáns live here. The folds in the mountains are very conspicuous and the summits are like serrated edges assuming fantastic shapes according to the individual imagination.

The Sása Kōṭ slope is gravel, sand and scree, hence during bad weather this pass is very difficult. Consequently the Kashmir Government banned this route for pilgrims. At the foot of the pass there were flower beds of Edelweiss, dandelion, and Geranium growing among stones. A little higher Corydalis falconeri grew side by side, while Euphorbia and Iris covered the higher slopes. Still higher Rododendron and creeping willow

covered the slope below the naked peaks. The Oxalis digyna, yellow and pink Corydalis and Saxifrage found their way near the top where the pack ponies go up with difficulty. It was through sheer providence that a ponyman and his pony were saved from being rolled down the precipice when the load fell over. All the peaks round about the pass have been reduced to pebbles and sand owing to insolation and weathering and heaps of small stones were seen everywhere.

The other end of the pass showed us Hōtyör Talav (*Murderer Tank*) (13,642 ft.) valley and in the distance we saw Kudur Pantsál (*Difficult Mountain*) meeting the horizon. The lake appeared like two expanded lobes of lungs with trachea. Once several hundred pilgrims perished here in a snow storm, so the people dreaded this lake.

The descent is gradual and there is a good pony track. The slopes are covered with alpine flowers and Adonis* Chrysoscyathus and thyme were common. Lower down the general Amar Nath road joins this track. We met several shepherds with large flocks. There is a big rock called Nagára pal (*Drum rock*) near the road. The pilgrims beat it with stones and then throw them at it.

Pantsa Tarni (*Five crossings*) is the last stage in the Amar Náth pilgrimage where the pilgrims camp. The valley runs south-east to north-west and is drained by the Pantsa Tarni river. The main tributary rises from glaciers while other small tributaries rise from the mountain side, hence their water is pure. During flood when all the tributaries join together, it is impossible to pass through the valley. There are sheds built by the Kashmir Government for the safety of pilgrims in bad weather.

We pitched our tents on the right bank towards the extreme end of the valley. The Government Officials were making

* Pheasant's eye.

bridges and mending the road for pilgrims. The pack ponies took 6 hours from Astán Marg to Pantsa Tarni.

Early next morning before the sunrise of July 26th we started for the Cave. It is 4 miles distant. The road is beautiful with a moderate ascent. We saw the mouth of the cave from the end of the defile in the dreary region where wear and tear in rock, destruction and construction by water, Nature's prime elements, take place.

A friend of Dr. Duke writes: 'The scenery is wild, grand and more imposing than anything I have seen in Kashmir. It is the trip to make. I shall never forget it. One felt the presence of the Maker of the Universe'.

The peaks round about are all about 17,000 ft. above sea level. The two glaciers on the side of the defile give rise to the torrent which flows in front of the cave. The road, owing to landslides, partly passed over the frozen ice covering the torrent. There is an ascent of about 100 yards to the cave. A little rill named the Amravati (*Immortality*) flows from the top of the cave and passes over the limestone or gypsum layers, hence the colour of the water is milky and the silt is white.

The pilgrims bathe in the water of Immortality, (men and women separately), besmear themselves with the white silt of the rill and put on new or well washed white clothes. Formerly they used to have loin cloth of birch bark. They enter the cave all white and spotless and forgetting self, become one with the Universal Soul. A local poet has said, '*When ye enter the cave, introspect and see whether you have installed the Almighty Eternal in the cave you live in*'.

The Cave (12,729 ft.) is in the side of a cliff of white mesozoic dolomite. Lime dissolves from the roof hence year by year the cave becomes bigger and bigger. It is about 60 ft. long 55 ft. broad and 50 ft. deep. There is an ice platform of a light blue

colour in the north-eastern corner. Some say it is really frozen springs varying according to seasonal temperature. On the platform on either side were two ice cones of about 1½ ft. high, not reaching the niche in the wall. There were some pieces of ice in another corner. It does not freeze wherever it drips. A natural phenomenon. There is an iron railing round the platform and also an iron enclosure outside. There were two pairs of snow pigeons (white body with a black bar on the tail) in the cave. A kind of warbler with a brown wash over black alighted to eat rice on the platform (*Pranali*).

Just outside the cave there were some plants of Corydalis crassifolia and a creeping willow with catkins exploding cottony stuff.

The cave faces towards the north. There is a ridge in front of it called Dámrishwar Bairau or Bairau Bál (14,000 ft.). Bairau is another aspect of Shivá which means *that which fills the universe*. He is beating a drum with his hands keeping the universe in rhythm.

Formerly the pilgrims used to go over this ridge. When they reached the saddle of the ridge, they had to go round its precipitous peak. In the bygone days it was said that some sadhus, in order to get rid of their physical body, threw themselves down over the rocks facing towards the cave thereby blending their souls with the Universal Soul. A better kind of worship would have been not to torture their physical frames but to live to serve and uplift humanity, to banish selfishness from this planet and be apostles of peace, goodwill and harmony.

Lower down on the other side of the ridge there was a rock underneath which was a narrow hole through which every pilgrim had to pass. This was called Garba Yátra (*Womb pilgrimage*). The underlying idea is of second birth, coming out fresh and sinless to meet one's Deity.

Amar Nath is an All India Pilgrimage. Every day there is a stream of visitors to this place. They hire ponies from Pahalgám and spend the night at Pantsa Tarni. Next morning after visiting the cave they go back to Pahalgám.

The chief day of the festival is on the full moon of August. (Sawan Purnámasi).

The Kashmir Government takes every precaution for the comfort of the pilgrims. At every stage there is a regular bazar and a doctor; civil officers and police make all necessary arrangements. Of course, in bad weather people scantily dressed suffer a good deal.

The Amaravati meets the Pantsa Tarsi at Sangam (confluence). On returning, the pilgrims used to perform ceremonies to remember their dead. But now the path goes high over the ridge and this place has been abandoned. It is here that we meet the goat track from Báltal and this is only passable in early June when the snow lies frozen over the torrent. At Báltal, the Har Nág stream joins the Amaravati which flows down in increasing volume and receives tht Gangabal water from the Wangat Nállah. It is then called the Sind and joins the Jhelum (Vitasta) at Shadipur (Prayág) sacred to the Hindus.

I am sorry we could not get time to survey the glaciers which feed the Pantsa Tarni, because some of us were very anxious to go to Pahalgám. So after having our food we left. The path rises gradually over the Rabi Bāl till it reaches the top of Mahā Gunas (*The great viper*). The descent begins from here to Waojen (12,230 ft.). The path on either side was rich in alpine flowers. Nearing Waojen there is a fall. A number of sheds have been built by the Government for pilgrims.

Waojen (12,230 ft.) is an exposed stage. The wind is very cold and strong. There is no wood except junior bushes of stunted growth.

The view of Shisheram Nag (11,730 ft.) was picturesque. It stretched from east to west. On the eastern side there are two virgin glaciers which feed the lake. One appears black, full of crevasses, the other is a small one. The western slope was covered with Inula Royleana (Poshkar) and Iris. A sand piper and yellow wagtail were looking for insects.

Zōjpal is midway between Waojen and Tsandanwári (Thanin). Not very far from here after crossing the stream is a lovely lake, Sona Sar (Golden lake 12,595 ft.), well worth seeing. There is a route going over the Sona Sar pass (14,500 ft.) into the Wardwon valley. We stayed here for the night and the pack ponies arrived in 6 hours.

Next day we started early in the morning. A flock of yellow-billed chough flew over the birch trees. We descended the Pisu Hill. To avoid the steepness and inconvenience to visitors, the Government has constructed another road for ponies.

We had our meal at Tsandanwári where we saw a number of visitors from the plains resting under the bracing breeze of the 5 needled pines. It is here that the stream from Astan Marg joins the one from Shishiram Nāg. The path at times kisses the torrent and at times winds high above the mountain spurs. The northern aspect of the pine-clad mountains, the green turf-covered patches, and the gurgling of the rushing torrent refresh the eyes. The southern aspect was covered with Verbascum thapsus (Bolar kon). One of the plants was 10 ft. high. In the afternoon we arrived in Pahalgám, the centre of activities.

After we had pitched our tents there was a deluge of rain. The torrent became a foaming river and the water became murky black. Such water is poisonous for trout, which get blinded and die.

During the night it cleared. The northern constellations spinning round the Polaris came in sight one by one, till they faded under the glare of the rising sun.

10. TAR SAR AND MAR SAR

Lovely was the drive of two hours in which the members of the Cashmir Climbing Club arrived at Pahalgám on July 14th, for their annual trek. The road was perfect.

The contractor supplied us with pack ponies and after examining their backs we loaded them. It began to drizzle and we left at 1.30 p.m. The path led through the forest. On our left, down in the torrent, we saw coolies with punting poles dislodging the logs from the log-jam. The contractors cut the wood and roll it down into the stream.

The elderberry with white umbrella-like flowers was in full bloom and thrushes and red-starts were enjoying the rapid flow of the stream.

In three hours' time we arrived at Arau, a distance of about 8 miles. It is a small village with a couple of dozen huts, entirely made of logs and unhewn planks, with no iron. A few willows grow round the huts and a few buck-wheat, maize, and potato fields surround the village. The fields are surrounded by fences made of branches on which meadow buntings were feeding their young. Several kites were gliding to and fro.

Here a stream flows from Katri Nāg* on Danawat hillock to join the main stream from the left bank. A path leads to Har Nāg valley and thence to Baltal.

The fir trees (budul) begin to grow scarce and the birch appears at this altitude. The path was shadeless over the meadow and it was better to start early. The wild dock (Wan

* It is said that there was a subterranean flow of water from this spring to the Tral village. The villagers displeased the Keeper of Water so he stopped it.

Obuj) was very common. When young, this plant is eaten and has a sour taste. The root is believed to cure boils.

Nearing Lidderwat, there was a small island in the torrent covered with yellow flowers—Erysimum altaicum (wan jafur), Corydalis Govaniana and a poplar. A stream from Tār Sar joins the Lidder. The route from the Sind valley meets the Lidder valley here. The bridge over the torrent must be strong for the pack ponies. We found two logs over which the Gujars cross. The bridge was two miles up Lidderwat and the pony-men carried the loads first on their shoulders and afterwards led the horses. We camped at Khalan on the right bank of the stream under sycamore (kunzal) and fir. All birch trees had withered up either by disease or because Gujars had stripped off the bark. There were three Gujar sheds with buffaloes and cows.

The morning of July 16th, was greeted by the sweet notes of whistling thrushes (Hazār Dastan) at 4.50 a.m. The place was turned into an orchestra. The sun rose at 7.45 a.m.

In the pouring rain we left our camp to pay a flying visit to the snout of the Kolahoi Glacier. We kept the path on the right bank of the river, over several beds of Caltha palastris till we came to the newly-built Gujar sheds at Satalanjan (seven branches) where the water from Sona Sar divides itself into several streams and enters the Lidder. The valley was covered with Senecio chrysanthemoides (mongol) and wild dock and the mountain slopes with birch trees. There was a bridge across the stream where we had camped for a fortnight with Rev. R. D. Thompson. It was about two and a half miles from this place to the snout of the Glacier. We caught a glimpse of the Kolahoi Peak. We halted on a rock about a quarter of a mile from the glacier. The boulders which had been so big and massive had been reduced to small stones during fifteen years of weathering. The snout appeared smaller and the river was like

a silvery streak flowing out of a crucible. The glacier was strewn with lateral moraines. A pair of Alpine swifts and snow pigeons were observed. We got back drenched to the skin after four hours of incessant rain.

On Monday the 17th we removed our camp. We followed the right bank of the stream and near Lidderwat we entered the ravine on the right. The whole slope was covered with rose bushes, Geums and yellow Potentillas. Vultures were hovering round the jagged peaks. Birch trees grew out of the joints of various strata of the mountains. We crossed a snow bridge near Hámwás and followed the right bank of the stream flowing from Tár Sar and Sekiwas. We passed three Gujar huts, and had a view of Kolahoi Peak.

We camped between the confluence of the Tár Sar and Sekiwas streams. In front of us was an islet covered with Saliva hians, blue Corydalis and many different varieties of Alpine flowers. The valley was called a Dánda Bari (Bull's Crack). Stones smoothened by weathering were scattered all over the valley. In between them grew floral vegetation. The birch was the only tree here and this too was in a dying state.

Early next morning we started, and took the right bank of the Tár Sar stream. The path by the left bank goes over boulders provided the course taken is higher up over the grassy spurs. We met a shepherd with his flock. In two hours' time we reached the lake (12,500 ft.). We undressed and had a swim in it. We put together our rubber canoe and launched it. What a delight it is to paddle a canoe! I remember a time when Mr Thompson (now Rev. R. D. Thompson) dived from a rock into the lake and Mrs Eric followed his example on this occasion. The water was transparent light and very sweet. Compared to Koñsar Nág the banks had a gentler slope and the mountains were not so high. It is neither so deep nor so awe-inspiring. There is an excellent camping ground, and fuel

can be procured by sending ponymen lower down as we did at Koñsar Nág.

After lunch we walked along the left bank of the lake and climbed a ridge (13,000 ft.). At its top was the demarcation line of Dachigám Rakh. The mist gathered and filled the head valley of Nágaberan concealing Már Sar from view. One could see Már Sar (the lake of Cupid) like the moon in a total eclipse. The mist cleared and the lake appeared a sheet of milk with a silvery streak of water draining the Dachigam valley and empty-ing itself into the reservoir which supplies water to the city of Srinagar. The Tar Sar slope of the ridge was covered with Geum elatum (Gogja potar) and Jurinea macrecephalia (Dhupa). On the top we found a small variety of Androsace. It took us one and a half hours to reach the top. Here we found some specimens of Rhododendron anthopogon (Yenga Posh).

We descended and walked along the shore of the lake and sat down for sometime to absorb the natural beauty of the place. The breeze ruffled the surface of the water a little and the crest of the wavelets catching the sun's rays turned the whole sheet of water into sparkling diamonds. In such sublime situations peace and serenity prevail over man's selfishness.

Near the Western shore of the lake we found two islets and a deep inlet where two small icebergs were floating. Many legends and superstitions are connected with these lakes. The southern slope was more or less precipitous. On the eastern side the place was covered with Potentillas. Redstarts and meadow buntings were pouring out their notes. We returned by the left bank.

There is a Puranic anecdote connected with the lakes. Once upon a time there was a demon Tárakásur who inflicted various kind of troubles on the gods. He had a boon granted to him by Brahma that he would be killed by the son of Shiva who had no son.

The gods assembled and prayed for relief from the demon. They went and entreated Már Kámadiv (Cupid) to agitate Shiva's mind. Már took with him Basant (Zephyr) and seated himself on one of the peaks of the Himalayas—Surishwar on the bank of the Dal Sarowar (Dal Lake). He selected a spot near Mahadiv from where he could watch Shiva and find an occasion to agitate his mind. This spot was Shala Mar (Shala—house), Mar—cupid or beauty). From here he could easily watch the movements of Shiva on mount Mahádiv.

One day Shiva in the company of Párwati was in full ecstasy. Cupid first sent Basant (Zephyr). He beautified the whole place with fragrant flowers and delicious sweet scent filled the air round them. Már shot his flowery arrow at Shiva which agitated his mind. He became furious and looked around the place from where the arrow darted. He saw Már with the bow in his hand. The fire from the third eye (Agni) of Shiva emerged and burnt Már to cinders. Basant escaped. Párwati got frightened and tears dropped from her eyes from which Társar Lake came into existence. Rati the wife of Már took up the burnt body of her husband Mar, threw it into the Tár Sar from which a part got separate and was called Már Sar and there exists today a hillock called Kamdev daki between the two lakes.

On Wednesday at 7 a.m., after tea we struck our tents. On our way we had a clear view of the Kolahoi Peak. A brown dipper was busy at his trade and yellow-billed choughs were feeding their young. At Sekiwas there were some Gujar huts. Here several routes meet. On the right was the general path going over Yemher Pass (13,400 ft.) and landing at Kulan in the Sind valley via Zaiwan; the middle path going over Sorafrah ridge was merely a goat track, not fit for ponies, leading into Sorafrah valley. The left path which we took led us over moderate ups and downs till we entered a long defile called Zöj Marg. It was swampy and not unlike Dánzab. Here we

found two shallow lakes named on the map Chanda Sar and Hoka Sar. Chanda Sar is a corrupt form of Tsandi Sar (*the lake of the goddess Tsandi, the destroyer of demons*). The terminus of the defile is Sona Mus, from which the descent began. Of course the descent for a couple of hundred yards is over shale and loose stones, but on the right and the left was the glorious floral vegetation next to Purmandal. There were beds of Primula rosea, Anemone tetrasepala, Codnopsis ovata, Caltha palustirs, Rhododendron (arboreum and anthopogon) one with rosy flowers the other with small yellowish flowers, Lindelofia, Cynoglossum, Myosotis and many more varieties. There was a beautiful tiny water-fall flowing from Hoka Sar. There were Gujars with their buffaloes and cows. We halted here to have our lunch.

We came down from the meadows through a densely forested area. We did not forget to gather mushrooms (hedar) for our evening meal. The path is not really a pony track, but it can be used if great care is taken. In some places it was really dangerous. We could manage our pack ponies all right. Looking back we could see the torrent rushing down in silvery foam between the dark green foliage of the slopes, and in front of us we could see the distant snow white serpentine flow of the Sind among the forested mountain slopes. On the way some of us saw two small snakes. Gujars with their families and buffaloes were going up to spend the summer in the meadows. We arrived at Sorafrah village at dusk and slept in the open. Mosquitoes with their 'song and sting' were ubiquitous.

Early on Thursday the 20th, we started and emerged at mile 34 on the general road to Ladákh, which was being prepared for wheeled traffic. We met the guardian of an old boy who gave us a wholesome drink of curds. Further down some of us climbed a mulberry tree to taste the wild fruit. We had our hasty lunch under the pleasant shade of a willow grove in which

a scarlet minivet was flitting about. At Kangan some of our old boys in charge of various departments came to receive us. Dr. Amar Nath Tiku of the Veterinary hospital gave us a warm welcome. We thanked them all and ambled on till about 5 p.m. We stopped at Nunnar on the bank of a canal of the Sind which we thought was free of mosquitoes. We heard several peewit calls.

Next morning some of us left after early tea, others in a lorry after lunch while others preferred to go to Ganderbal. There they engaged a boat. In the slow, serene flow of the Sind, the boat glided circuitously past the cool refreshing islets covered with willows. They crossed the lake studying the water birds enjoying the sight of lotus blossoms and landed at Alam Sahib the suburb of Srinagar. (*Shri—beautiful, nagar—city*).

11. WARDWON VALLEYS

The Wardwon, commonly known as Marau Wardwon valley, is a luxuriant pasturage situated to the east of Kashmir proper and separated by three mountain ranges. It is a long defile of about fifty miles running north to south. It is drained by the Wardwon river which rises from the snout of the Bhotkol glacier and joins the Chenáb.

We chose a short way via Pantsálthan and did not go by the Margan pass (11,500 ft.). It took us one hour and a half from Anantnág to Pantsálthan in a lorry. Noon is an unusual time of the day to get coolies. Through the influence of Mr. Shridar Buth we managed to get coolies. Loads were distributed and we started at 3.30 p.m.

The ascent was through fir trees and over big fallen rotten trees. We passed one or two Gujar sheds round which there was a very bad smell. On the way we passed a single crane's bill from time to time. We reached on the other side of the pass (9,000 ft.) in the Naobug valley at 7 p.m. The coolies were far behind. We waited and waited but no trace of them could be found. Night fell. We lit a bonfire, despatched the groom Ahadoo and a Gujar with a torch of inflammable wood to enquire about the coolies. They returned without news.

We managed to get some milk from a Gujar. A few loaves of bread without any fish was all we could get for our supper. We cut some pine leaves to make a downy bed for Dr. Smyth and the ladies on the roof of a hut under a big pine tree. We borrowed two blankets from the kind Gujar. Unfortunately they were teeming with the usual guests. One we gave to the ladies and the other we spread under and above four of us in-

cluding Dr. Morris. Dr. Smyth awoke at 2.30 a.m., and in order to keep herself warm she kept roaming into the moonlit forest to collect pieces of wood for the fire which she managed to keep burning. We had a struggle with fleas inside the Gujar hut. Our knees were not very far from our mouth. Dawn came at last to our great relief. We sat round the bonfire and limb after limb gradually thawed. We sent Ahadoo to buy tea and sugar from a shopkeeper (very difficult to find) 3 miles away. There was no pot to make tea in. From the same kind Gujar we got half a broken pot and one aluminium cup. So, patiently, one by one, *ladies first,* we had our breakast. The tea stimulated my powers of vision and I could see a cinnamon-headed sparrow and a rose finch.

The coolies arrived at 10.30 a.m. They had spent the night at the top of the mountain. Darkness had fallen, so they said that they could not find the path in the forest. Lasa Bhat our servant was with them. They were all farmers and were not coolies by profession. Hence they lagged behind.

Exactly the same happened to us when we crossed the Bhotkol glacier on August 4th, 1926.

We cooked our morning meal at Gauran, the village at the extreme end of the Naobug valley. It is a fertile valley. The general road to Kashṭawár starts from here. We gave medicine to some patients.

We spent the night of Wednesday, 7th August, at Naukan (9,000 ft.), the head of Naobug valley at the foot of the pass (11,187 ft.). Here we found Parnassia nubicola. Lovely was the view of the Brahma Peaks and the valley below. We saw some choughs and jungle crows. Some Gujars with their wives assembled here for treatment. Dr. Morris examined the men and Dr Smyth sang to them.

Next day, on the 8th, we started at 7 a.m. The ascent to the Hyut Niuk (thin throat) pass (11,187 ft.) is gradual. The keen

scent from the Corydalis govaniana, which grew profusely, filled the air. The blue poppy (Meconopsis aculeata), the Queen of Kashmir flowers, grew in clusters under the rocks. It was difficult to take one's eyes off these lovely gems of Nature.

Looking down towards the valley we could see the Brahma Peaks wrapped in haze like the spirits of the astral plane. The lower parts of the mountains were covered with firs, while the upper parts were devoid of trees, but here and there were patches of Rhododendron and juniper bushes. Near the top a few hundred yards were covered with big boulders where the ponies found the going very difficult.

The top is flat with a streamlet flowing from the mountain side. Here the coolies sat down to have their lunch. We saw two snowy peaks and wondered whether they belonged to the Nun Khun massif. We saw two kinds of redstarts. A mile on we had our lunch with Dr. Morris and Mrs. Bavington, who were waiting for us under a big rock surrounded by several species of pink pedicularis. Some of us went ahead and waited till Dr Smyth arrived on her pony. This was stolen later, but we got it back because the thief heard that one of our old boys was in charge of the Police Station here.

The path ran through the middle of the mountain and on either side of it flowers were widely diffused. A kestrel was hovering over its prey. From one of the turnings of the pass we could see Inshen on the Bhotkol river in the Wardwon valley like a mole on a green body. We arrived here at 5 p.m., and the number of different species of flowers was 93.

Inshen is a village of 20 houses including a mosque and a shop. The huts are made of hewn planks joined together by notches and wooden pegs. Houses are of two storeys. In the ground storey cattle are kept. The upper storey is used for eating and sleeping. The only trees are willows (not a great number) in which tits, house sparrows, goldfinches, greenfinches, shrikes,

doves and redstarts are heard. Of course the jungle crow and hoopoe were there. The produce of the fields is Tibetan barley, Italian millet, ordinary millet, amaranth and buckwheat which hardly lasts for 3 months. They get maize from Kashmir. The peasants were badly off. In winter avalanches had swept away trees, and obstructed a stream which gave them water. Their fowls had died for want of grain. Now rinderpest carried off most of their cattle throughout the valley. I remember 10 years previously when we visited the extreme part of the valley the same disease was rife among the cattle. The people were in great poverty.

We met here two of our old boys, Pt. Prem Nath Dhar, Superintendent of Police and Pt. Tara Chand, the Deputy Inspector of Police who had come here to make an enquiry into a murder case. They were of great help to us and to the people of the locality.

It rained on Tuesday the 11th, and the whole medical work was done in tents. On Thursday the 13th, it cleared. The patients came from far off villages and high meadows. The general complaints were bad eyes, dyspepsia, rheumatism and debility. We gave magic lantern shows twice. The spectators were much impressed and grateful.

The men and women were of primitive nature. They had never, so far in their life, tasted medicine. A Gujráni (goatkeeper's wife) had bad eyes. Medicine was put into her eyes and a bandage put on. The next day when she returned for the second visit, the Doctor found out that she had taken off the bandage from her eyes and wrapped it round her chit (recipe) lest it should get lost.

Another woman brought her girl of 6 with a stomach ache. She was given castor oil. She would not drink it but ran away. Her mother entreated Mrs. Bavington to be allowed to take the castor oil instead of her daughter.

The sun of 14th August saw the party leaving Inshen at 8 a.m. We kept on the left bank of the river. The position of the villages among the rich verdure and the structure of the hovels is very picturesque. The Impatients Roylei (Trul) and Achhillium millifolium (phöl gassa) are very common. The root of the latter herb is chewed as a remedy for toothache. In the river there were some islets densely covered with dwarf willows. The valley opens at Ofat where we recrossed a shaking bridge. Several streams flow down from the mountain sides. The crops here were plentiful. We stopped for lunch at Basmin, which is half way between Inshen and Sukhnis. The smell of dead animals when we passed the village was very unpleasant. About 400 cattle had died. We counted as many as 14 griffon and scavenger vultures waiting for carcasses outside the village. Several meadow buntings and larks were visible.

We crossed another shaking bridge near Mareg. Here Dr. Smyth received a deputation from the village. A crowd of 103 men, women and children, some carried on improvised stretchers, some on backs, some on horses, mothers carrying their children in their arms were waiting for a healing hand from the Doctor.

A council of war was held. It was decided that half of the party should move on to Sukhnis while the other party with the Doctor opened medicine chests to give drugs to the sick. The path rose a little higher, strewn with Polygonum, Senecio, Dipsacus inermis (*wopal hák.*) and many wild flowers. A rose finch was twittering on a Polygonum alpinum plant. The slopes of the mountains and the valley itself were an abundant pastureland, hence sheep, goats, horses, cows and buffaloes were seen grazing. There were also a large number of bakörbáns (goatherds), who treat the peasants unkindly and try to usurp their lands. Their temporary sheds were seen all along the valley on the mountain slopes. Rikinwas is a hamlet of 12 huts and 5 big Kabuli poplars. The yellow flowers of the Tanacetum

and Senecio in the tall grass were charming. We crossed to the right bank over a shaking bridge. Casting a glance behind, we could see in the background a pine-covered mountain slope, clothed with velvety green herbage, and in the centre of the valley was the village like a black spot on a green carpet.

What a lovely walk among the flowers it was! We pitched our tents on a promontory overlooking Sukhnis village. When we visited this village in 1926, there were only 12 huts, but now the number has increased. It is the extreme village of the Wardwon valley. One can go in 3 marches to Suru (Baltistan). Mr. R. D. Thompson's crutch marks are still in the valley, if not on the moraines of Bhotakol glacier, when he visited this part 10 years ago and crossed Chiling La (17,000 ft.) on one leg and crutches.

The 16th was Sunday. We took our lunch with us and went for a walk high up in the rank vegetation and sat under a pine. Dr. Morris followed us a few minutes later, but he could not find us. We were very sorry that he had to go back to the camp in the hot sun for lunch. He must have had an enjoyable lunch after his exhausting walk. During this respite we catalogued 9 different varieties of Nepeta.

What a wonderful world comes in sight when a flower is examined under a microscope. Just as we get a glimpse of the immensity of God when we realise that our earth is only a speck compared with the stars of the universe. In the same way when we examined a flower, the skill, care and wisdom of the Almighty came into our ken. We cannot but bow down our head to the All Powerful in thankfulness, praise and adoration. Prayer can be given practical shape only when we realise that

> *'He prayeth best who loveth best,*
> *All things both great and small,*
> *For the dear God who loveth us*
> *He made and loveth all.'*

The total number of patients treated was 1384 and the number of operations performed was 38.

On the 20th, we struck camp, allotted loads to coolies and left for Purmandal. We followed the left bank of the Niur stream with its white foamy flow, which the dippers, redstarts and the sand-pipers haunt. It takes its rise from the mountains of Purmandal. The lower part of the valley is mostly covered with Polygonum, alpinum, ferns and tall thistles, which are very common at Tosamaidán. We found a dead snake about 2 ft. long and 2 inches in circumference. The flowers were scattered all through the valley like the stars in the firmament. In some places the islets in the stream were covered with Pedicularis wallichii, yellow tansy, and in fact flowers of all colours. What a joy it was to see a Marsh primula!

It took us 3 hours to reach Purmandal. The coolies arrived 2 hours behind us. There were two Gujar sheds there. We gave medicine from the Sukhnis camps to some of their inmates.

The waters from a small glacier and from Sonasar pass join to form the Niur stream. The 21st was stormy and rainy and the wind was very cold. We were detained for the day. The night of the 22nd saw the surrounding mountains covered with fresh snow. In the morning it cleared and we started at 11.30 a.m. The ascent to the pass was gradual. The whole place was covered with floral vegetation and there was not a foot of space where one could not find at least half a dozen flowers. It was indeed a natural flower garden and a paradise for the botanist. At a slight breeze, the loveliest would dance, beckon with their heads and rejoice at seeing a passerby. Should not a visitor in response to their feelings revel in their beauty?

We found several specimens of Aconitum, Labiataes, Delphinium, Corydalis, Lynchnis and many other herbs. The rose-finch was not the least gorgeous among these.

There was a small tarn of emerald green in which water from an adjoining glacier accumulates. About 500 yards of the last portions of the pass consisted of boulders, loose shale and sand and was very steep. We found some specimens of Pleurospermum, Allardia glabra, Corydalis govaniana, but did not see any Sassurea sacra. Nurse Sant Lal was by now almost exhausted. It was only by the help of J. L. that she managed to cross the peak (15,000 ft.). The other side of the pass was covered with new snow, but the path was not very difficult. The slope to the Sonasar lake was bad. We found the beautiful lake a little silted up. The rock on the far side was in water and miniature icebergs were floating in it when we visited the lake in 1926. Red polygonum and Trollius acaulis were everywhere. We reached Burzakot at 9 p.m. The cave of Amar Nath is 3 stages from here.

Zöjapal to Shishram Nág	...	5 miles
Shishram Nág to Pantsatarni	...	5 ,,
Pantsatarni to the Cave	...	4 ,,
Pantsatarni via Bairau Bál to the Cave	...	2½ ,,

Next day after breakfast we removed our tents and descended the Pisu hill (11,300 ft.) and reached Tsandan Wōr. On the way we found several specimens of Edelweiss. A snow pigeon and a pair of vultures were flying to and fro. We had our lunch on the Lidder. In an hour's time we arrived in a Pahalgám (11 miles). We went to see some of our old boys and especially Miss Murch, who was camping in a secluded nook of the dell under pines not far from the stream, a haven of rest for orphans. At 5 p.m., Mr. Bavington blew the horn of his lorry and we hurried to take our seats. In 2½ hours time he deposited us safely at the C.M.S. Newman Hospital, Rainawari.

The sun set the clouds on fire and it was a forcast of fair weather next morning. The dark night was not less fascinating. The camp lights of the visitors were vying with the polar star and the constellations and the Milky way seemed to span the sky from one mountain peak to another. The Kolahoi peaks were bare of clouds.

An excursion makes boys resourceful. They learn to face difficulties and to stand on their own legs. The boy who knows how to rule his servants here learns how to serve others. Najum and Saltanat, the sons of Chilas Rajas, were helping Gulam Mahmad and Ali Mahmad in cooking. Mr. Bavington tasted our food and conferred the degree of M.C. (master of cooking) on R.N. I think on such occasions M.C. is far better than M.Sc.

July 28th. Left Pahalgám at 8 a.m. The loads for the coolies were rather heavy. We could not get more coolies, nor was there a guide with us to lead us through this untrodden way. The path goes along the slope of the mountain. We saw the maize and buckwheat fields and in some places the wheat was being reaped. On the right hand side the mountain slopes facing towards the north are densely forested, because they are windward slopes, and receive the benefit of the winds saturated with moisture, while the slopes facing towards the south are in rain-shadow, hence very little vegetation.

The swift stream with its silvery spray rushes in haste to meet her grand-father the ocean. Not only men, wagtails and robins, but also flowers rejoice and dance when they see the foaming torrent. There is a small village midway between Pahalgám and Tsandan* Wári (Thánin) pent up in a ravine amidst the cone-bearing trees. The houses are made of hewn planks of wood.

* Sandalwood remarkable for its fragrance.

Here is a vast field for an ornithologist to observe birds. This forest is rich in bird-like as well as the region between Pahalgám and Arau. We observed the following birds—the plumbeous redstart, the grey wagtail, the tree creeper, and a Willow-warbler. We also saw a dipper diving in the torrent and a grey-headed thrush.

We arrived at Thánin which lies at the junction of two streams and the coolies refused to go further. We distributed some of their loads amongst ourselves and they were made to continue. Mr. B. carried the kilter and R. N. the vegetable sack. We ascended the Pisu Hill (11,081 ft.). It has a good pony track. At its bottom end the coniferous belt and birch trees begin to appear. On the right and left we heard the musical calls of the aerial inhabitants, but I could not identify all of them.

R. N. was a lictor in the case of the coolies, otherwise they would have stayed behind. At sunset we reached the top. The sun dyed the clouds orange and its reflection on the brown naked craggy peaks was magnificent. In front of us we saw the naked weather-worn peaks like a saddle ready for the winds to ride. On our right and left was the sky kissing old craggy peaks, the home of jungle crows and vultures, looking with a frowning aspect towards the sky. The path full of the strong scent from the adjoining flower beds is more or less level. On the right the water, looking like molten silver rushes down the perpendicular slope to meet the torrent below.

It was very dark when we reached Burzakot. The path runs from here over a snow bridge. We arrived at Zöjpal when it was quite dark and the lantern light showed us the camp. We pitched our tent on the right bank of the Shishiram Nág torrent.

Fuel was scarce. Some P.W.D. coolies happened to be in their tent; they were repairing the Amar Nath road. When they saw us coming they concealed all the juniper fuel which was with them and pretended to be fast asleep in the tent. We

went with our lantern into their tent and awakened them; one of them laughed and that broke the silence; and after some altercation they gave us a little wood.

It was now 11.30 p.m., which we ascertained by the position of the stars. At Thánin our watch showed 2 p.m., but actually it was 5.30 p.m., hence the fault of our late arrival here rested with this watch! This place was very cold like Sekiwas, and chill breezes always blew. Except the birch trees of stunted growth and juniper no trees were to be seen.

July 29th. We left Zöjpal (11,578 ft.) and crossed the stream to the other side where there were two shepherd tents. We gave medicines to some of the shepherds and took two more coolies from here. We kept to the left bank of the stream and ascended 500 ft., along the right bank of another torrent from the Sona Sar lake, till we reached the meadow on the top of the hill. The meadow is covered with flowers of iridescent colours.

At the end of the meadow lies the fascinating lake called Sona Sar (12,245 ft.) amidst the high mountains; its shape is like the beak of a wood-cock. It has transparent sky-blue water with miniature icebergs floating in it. The whole lake looks like a sapphire embossed with aquamarine. The mountain slopes were covered with glaciers. It is the glacial water which accumulates in the depression and forms the lake. It is more romantic than the Sona Sar (13,000 ft.) east of the Kolahoi valley. Its shores were graceful with Primula rosea.

Here we were in the bosom of nature, breathing nature, feeling nature, and assimilating nature, outside the artificial civilisation of the world. One is tempted to be as wild as wild nature. *Here man's mind is set free from cares and anxieties, and is steady like the unswerving flame of a candle. He is here as nature's son in nature's arms.*

We kept the lake to our left. The path goes along the bank over the perpendicular slope of the mountain. It is a goat track.

The whole slope has several snow beds with grassy patches here and there. As far as possible we tried to avoid these snow beds and walked over the grassy patches. The coolies took a different path—the one to the right. We avoided it because it was very steep and sandy. Two coolies followed us, but when they were high up both of them slipped over the snow and joined the rest of the coolies below. One of them was clever enough not to let go the oil can which was in his hands. The kangri fell down, rolling into the lake.

We climbed righer and higher and the ascent became steeper and steeper. R. N. left us and joined the coolies. Had he also slipped it would have saved him from much walking. In going up the steep ascent the coolies every time seemed to kiss their toes. It was all snow.

We were now on the snow line going higher and higher. I think we climbed several hundred feet higher than the pass. The snow near the boulders was loose and some of us several times went waist deep in the snow. A puppy of four months was with us, it shivered with cold; we tried to put it into a pocket but it could not be accommodated. We then kept it in a knap-sack, but it kept barking, signifying that it preferred walking. But we carried it for some time. There was no way in front of us except over the tapering cliffs covered with snow. We began now to go to the left of what we thought to be the pass. A thick fog enveloped us and we could see nothing. We sat on an island of debris amidst the sea of snow. We had no guide and practically we were lost. We bowed our heads to the All-wise Being to show us the way and to take away the fog. No sooner had we raised our heads than the fog disappeared, and below us under this debris we saw R. N. with coolies coming up, and he told us that he had three guides with him—villagers from Wardwon coming back after having bought maize from Pahalgám. We gave him three hearty cheers.

It reminds me of a friend of mine, a great swimmer who taught more than 150 boys how to swim and who was down with typhoid in the Hospital; he was seriously ill. The Principal went to see him. It chanced that the doctor also at the same time visited the patient. The doctor told the Principal that the patient could hardly live that night and would expire soon, but the kindhearted Principal said, 'No, he will live. Let us pray'. They both knelt down by the bed of the patient praying to God to restore his health. The Principal had no sleep for the night. Early in the morning he again came to see the patient in the Hospital; and was overjoyed to see him alive. He recovered and is still living.

Such is the efficacy of prayer.

The mist was a help to us, but for it we would not have waited for R. N. and would have descended by another way, whether to live or to die I cannot say. From here the guides led us over the granular snow, field after field; in some places we cut steps with our staves, and at every step we pressed our heels hard that they might not slip. The Principal had insisted on our tying a rope round our waist on such occasions. We had the rope with us but had foolishly forgotten to use it. We reached a place called Gosön Gaṇd in the snow, which resembles the Matterhorn. At the top of the pass (15,000 ft.) we witnessed the greatness and grandeur of the Himalayas, the mother of the mighty Indian rivers. The view was grand.

Here the wind was very cold and strong. Our hands were benumbed with cold, and we could hardly hold our staves. We began to descend the pass. It is just like Yemher (13,400 ft.) but is steeper and more sandy. On the right we saw a small tarn—a mere collection of ice water—called Kön Nág (blind spring). The water does not flow out. Over the snow beds, over the boulders we came to a pasture land and in the dark

pitched our tent at the foot of the pass. The place is called Purmandal and is at the head of the Sukhnis ravine. It is a nice camping ground. Two glacier streams meet here, one from the north and the other from the west. The flowers and the birds were the same as observed last year at the foot of the Kolahoi glacier. There was everywhere dry and wet buffalo dung. There were some eight huts of Gujars, who come here with their buffaloes and herds for the summer months, and before autumn sets in they repair to their villages. One of them came to us and after we told him who we were, he was surprised and said, 'I have never seen school masters coming by this way'. The same was the remark passed by a Gujar last year at Zaiwan. The former sent us fuel and told us that his son was a student in one of our schools at Anantnag. The night was cold. We warmed our feet by placing them on hot stones as advised by the Principal.

July 30th. Early in the morning we massaged each other with hands and feet to remove fatigue. Just as a shrinker shrinks a blanket with soap and water to make it thick, so we pressed one another to make our muscles fit for the move.

We removed the camp from Purmandal to Sukhnis. Crossing several streams and snow bridges, the path goes over the slope on the left of the stream. There are no trees except juniper. By the right ravine the way goes to Butakot or Aishi Mukám. As we neared Sukhnis the coniferous belt appeared. Several marmots hooted at us, probably because we entered their territory without a passport. The general road by the Wardwon valley meets here. To our great pleasure we met here Tika Lal, late master, now forest officer employed to stop kuth smuggling. He had found Mandak Sar unfordable, hence he could not go to Suru via Chaling La (17,000 ft.). He had to come back all the way from Mandak Sar to Sukhnis.

Sukhnis (8,952 ft.) is a small colony of some huts at the head of the Wardwon Valley. These huts are made of hewn planks joined together with wooden pegs. For six months of winter the people are imprisoned in their houses. They have to get stores, wood, fodder and all sorts of provisions. They have no candles or lanterns; they make a torch of pieces of inflammable wood tied together and these serve them as a gas lamp would serve us.

We sent Saltanat with Tika Lal's chaprasi to get coolies for us. The coolies from Pahalgám refused to go over the glacier.

July 31st. A day of halt. Cloudy and drizzling. A walk to the terraces of the village. Three roads meet at this village, one from Pahalgám, one from Wardwon one from Suru. The village lies at the confluence of two streams: one comes from the snow beds of the Sona Sar Pass, a stream of pure water, the other flows from the snout of the Bhotkol glacier, a stream of dirty water containing very fine sand and mineral particles. The people are good and simple. The produce of their fields is barley and buckwheat. The year's produce barely suffices to feed the population for winter months. We selected coolies for the following day; out of the lot only two were new who had not traversed the Ságar (Ice ocean). The birds observed here were the grey wagtail, the white-capped redstart, the brown dipper, the red-browed finch, the gold finch, the hoopoe, the swallow, the jungle crow, the red-billed chough, the white throat and the rock thrush.

We also cut some geological specimens from some rocks. From here almost every stone contains mica. Here we learnt that Mr. and Mrs. Thompson had left for Suru two days ago. It is here that Mr. B. B. Osmaston, the distinguished ornithologist had constructed a bridge over the torrent. The peasants are very grateful for this.

August 1st. We left Sukhnis before sunrise. Some of us decided to go to Srinagar via Wardwon, and we took the direction of Suru. The path goes along the right bank of the Bhotkol river in moderate ascents and descents. There is a bridge at Sukhnis. We did not cross this bridge, but crossed a snow bridge which had a crevass over which we jumped. The path in some places is very difficult for ponies. The music of aerial Orpheuses, the thundering roar of the boisterous river and the flower beds in rainbow colours were exhilarating. We had to ford several streams, which rushed down the mountain slopes. It was very interesting to see Tika Lall jumping over these torrents.

In several places drins (marmots), taking us for intruders, hooted at us. The marmot is a brown animal larger than a cat, with a mouse-like face and a bushy tail. At two place there were Himalayan whistling thrushes singing.

The vegetation is luxuriant on the left bank. At Wañhoi we found Costus Root (Koṭh), 'Saussurea lappa', which is largely extracted in these districts and was exported to China to be burnt as incense in the temples. Its value was increasing day by day, hence armed smugglers come here to steal it. Its leaf is like that of a pumpkin, but the petiole of the leaf has small leaflets attached to both sides. The flower looks like four buds together. It is a big plant and its root is supposed to be very useful. Its mention in the Yagupavit ceremony shows that its use was known from the earliest times. When a new well is dug a piece of the root is put into the water to clean it. One part Koṭh and two parts cane sugar is supposed to cure ulcer of the stomach. It is also powdered and in sesamum oil rubbed on a rheumatic limb.

We came to a plateau and descended to terraces. Each terrace is a flower bed in itself. There we saw flowers of all colours. One is inclined to think it a corner of Eden. At its

his comrades came, threw ropes and pulled him out. He had been twenty-two times to Suru, and appeared to us an expert guide and a willing worker.

August 3rd. Started off from Kanital (11,500 ft.) at sunrise. Began to ascend the undulating surface over the sharp boulders and sand, over the ice tongues at the foot of the glacier. These boulders from the over-hanging cliffs are reduced by dust by weather, and in course of ages this dust is again turned into rock. In the same way we see water assuming various forms as ice and vapour. The changes in the weather are responsible for all this. So rock and dust, water and vapour are interdependent. All pebbles and stones shine in the sun because they contain either mica, lead, silver or some other mineral. We cut several specimens from these rocks.

The river Bhotkol (Chenáb) rises out of this glacier at three different mouths. We began to walk over the glacier, which is a river of ice. The crevasses were very dangerous. The surface of the glacier is full of crevasses, parallel and cross, hence it is dangerous to cross it without a guide. Some of the crevasses are very narrow and over these we jumped, while others were several yards wide and some a hundred feet deep. To avoid these we took a zigzag course. We heard of several casualties in this region. Last year two servants of a European disappeared. A bearer of another Englishman was seen floating on the glacial water after 12 years. His body was infact, only his trousers were torn. When we were ascending we saw two Baltis descending, afterwards they disappeared. Whether they fell into the crevasses or sat behind a rock I cannot tell. Asdo showed us the place where he had fallen last year.

Some crevasses are covered with snow, especially in early summer. We saw some of these hidden crevasses covered with snow turned yellow. Some parts are covered with debris and mounds. Small rills come down the surface. We drank water

from these. Some parts, where the moraines were on both sides, looked like a road made of crystal, worthy of a carriage with ivory wheels. In some parts where the crevasses are wide they are called Hashi noshi Rávachi (*mother-in-law, daughter-in-law crevasses*).

We were now at the foot of the Ságar Nor. Here a mountain divides the glacier into two parts, one on the right—the actual glacier—goes towards the Nun Khun, while the other Ságar Nor pass (14,485 ft.) goes to the left, covered with granular snow over which we had now to ascend. According to Dr. A. Neve, who gave his life for the Kashmiris, this glacier is about 15 miles long and one mile broad and is called Barmal glacier, and comes all the way from Nun Khun. Mr. B. Workman does not agree with this. Over this glacier there is a way to Tungol, but it is impassable.

We now began to ascend the pass covered with snow, and our exhaustion was great; only R. N. climbed like the swift-footed ibex. Trudging along, resting on the stones, we ascended foot by foot, inch by inch, till we came to the top of the pass to a valley of snow. Here we sat down to rest and to have something to eat. It was probably 12 o'clock. The view was fascinating, never to be forgotten.

On our left was a conical mountain like the bill of a grosbeak pecking the sky, on our right was an expanse of snow. In front of us were the crevasses in hundreds, rising wall above wall, guarding the invincible forts of mountains clad with silvery snow, and beyond was the ice plateau. In fact everything was white and bright. We were the only black specks on that glittering surface. *Does not every being desire to become a ray of the Divine Light which floods the Universe?*

We now began to descend on the other side into the country of the Baltis (Tibetans). The path goes along the left over the slope of the mountain, over the shifting sand, over boulders

and debris of rocks, till we descend to the northern part of the Bhotkol glacier which is called Nuel Ságar (*Blue ocean*). It is a plateau of blue ice several hundred feet thick. It has no crevasses. On the right in the niches of mountains there are five small glaciers, while on the left there is a big one. These are feeders of this ice plateau over which several rushing torrents flow on parallel lines. Here we heard the thunder of several falling avalanches. The path turns now over the dry slope. Here we saw several Indian redstarts, red-billed choughs and doves.

A tributary of the Suru river takes its rise from this part of the glacier. The mountain slopes are void of vegetation. Stones and boulders take the place of flowers. The river has carved out a valley and another stream from Mooskul Pass (14,000 ft.) joins here. The place is called Donor (12,300 ft.). The folds in the structure of these mountains look very strange. We arrived here at 3 p.m. after nine hour's hard going. It has a good camping ground. Fuel can be had with difficulty and the mosquitoes are a pest. There are some bakörbáns (goatherds) who are ready to serve you in every way, if you are friendly to them. They gave us some milk and we made tea. The coolies arrived at 6 p.m. Here we met Rasool Shah the bearer of Mr. Thompson and he told us that Mr. Thompson had left for Chiling La (17,000 ft.) that morning and had taken with him all provisions ready made for the meal and sent back the luggage to Meru (hot springs). We were disappointed. It was a nice paper-chase. The hare was Mr. Thompson and we were running after him. He had left Srinagar one week before us.

It was now 6.30 p.m. We determined to go to Suru, another ten miles going through an unknown region, but we had a guide with us who had visited the place 22 times. We crossed the Mooskul stream on the shoulders of bakörbáns. The path passes along the left bank of the stream. There are moderate ascents

and descents. In some places there are flowers scattered among the rocks, but no trees. Several torrents cross the road and Asado carried us across these. Several grey-headed and yellow-headed wagtails were seen flying in the bushes. It was night. We could see nothing except the black ramparts of mountains on our right and left and the thundering river below. The firmament was clear of clouds, the tail of the Great Bear was visible.

We had now to cross the river. There were now only 2 miles to Suru. The guide showed us a snow bridge which he told us to cross. There was a crevass in it on the other side and the middle part had gone down a foot, so we hesitated to go over it. 'Is there no other way to cross?' we said. 'Yes; there is a wooden bridge, but that means two miles more walking', said the guide. He insisted on our going over the snow bridge and he was right. He crossed it first, left his load on the other side and one by one with his guidance we crossed the dangerous bridge. Here again we forgot to tie the rope round our waists. Over the slippery slope he guided us into Suru.

The coolies were far behind. It was now 10.30 p.m. Everybody was asleep. We had no food, no bedding, practically nothing. We were led to the rest-house, which is like a cattle-shed with a flat roof. It was full of fleas and bugs. We preferred to sit outside. We had the velvet-like turf for our bed and the blue dome of the sky decorated with the pearls of the stars for our quilt. We lay down to sleep. About midnight the cold woke us and we preferred to be stung by fleas inside the resthouse rather than to be exposed to the cold wind. We collected some dry faggots and lit a fire. R. N. searched his knapsack and found two handfuls of sugar. We boiled the sugar with water and Asado gave us two handfuls of satu (roasted flour of buckwheat) which the Baltis eat. We mixed it with the water and each of us ate a cup of gruel. The good

guide gave us his blanket and brought some round and smooth stones for our pillows and then we had a little sleep.

It is a good arrangement always to be at the stage at 4 or 5 p.m. If one means to cover two stages, one must rise very early so that one may arrive at the destination, when the sun is high up in the heavens. We made these forced marches merely to catch Mr. Thompson, but he was flying like an eagle over the glaciers and craggy peaks.

August 4th. The coolies arrived in the morning. They had lodged for the night under a rock in the way. We sent a coolie with a letter to Mr. Thompson. We rested the whole day, '*To ring out weariness and fatigue and to ring in strength and endurance*'. The compound of the inn is surrounded by willows. It is the only tree which grows in this region. Some leaves were seen twisted in such a way that the end of the leaf became a berry. The natives say that it cures stomach ache, but I think it creates it. On these trees we heard the incessant call of Hodgson's rose-finch, '*Which it, which you*' and saw a Kashmir magpie (a bird as large as jackdaw, glossy black overcoverts white under parts and shoulders, long black tail). The native name of this bird is *Khashim Brah*. There were a good number of house-sparrows.

From here one can have a view of the Nun Khun (23,400 ft.). Khun means covered, the peak being like a dome and covered with snow. Nun means naked, it is not covered with snow and is like a finger pointing towards the Creator of the Universe.

Suru lies in the inner Himálayan range where the winds saturated with moisture do not reach. The Monsoon winds discharge their moisture on the outer Himálayan range and when they reach here they are dry. Hence this region has a scanty rainfall and vegetation is also poor, but where the water is abundant vegetation is rich; buckwheat, peas, beans, barley and in some places wheat are grown. This produce can hardly

maintain the population for four or five months. Those who have horses can go to Kashmir and get maize or rice, but those who have none are badly off. Their chief food is roasted wheat flour with water called thopa, and when meat is boiled in it, it is a dainty for them. The people are poorly dressed. They have a long loose woollen frock with hundreds of patches and a girdle round their waist. They are very dirty. There are only three occasions during their life time when they take a bath. The first when they come into the world, the other when they chance to fall into a river, the third and the last when they die. One cannot be quite sure whether they do bathe on the first or last occasions. There are no shops to supply them with any necessaries of life; they have to go to Kargil, a distance of 3 stages to buy their things. If you give them a handful of sugar they stretch their hands with eagerness. They are simple and truth loving but contact with the outside world makes them crafty and cunning.

The houses are one-storeyed with walls of mud and stones and flat roofs. The shutters are made of wicker work. The houses are huddled together. From a distance the whole village looks like one big house with huge dog kennels jutting out on each side. It is said that they never cleanse nor sweep their houses, for if they do so blessedness will flee from them.

This day at 10 a.m., we received a reply from Mr Thompson advising us to go either via Zoji La (10,500 ft.) or by Wardwon.

August 5th. We washed our clothes. In the afternoon we went to see the fort. It is a mud structure about thirty yards square with four towers on four sides. One tower has tumbled down. It is guarded by four soldiers who have forty matchlocks, thirtyseven of which are rusted. This fort was built by Wazir Zorawar who conquered this part of the country for Maharaja Gulab Singh. Asado told us that when the Balti King was captured and slain his body was dissected and it was

found that he had seven hearts. His forehead was two and a half yards wide. If it be true probably several mats could have been woven out of his viscera. There is a small fresh spring. Close by is the grave of Capt. Christian whose remains rest here in the lap of the Himálayas. The fort is situated at the junction of two rivers. The Suru river which rises in the snout of the great glacier on the north western side of Nun Khun and the other which rises in the northern Bhotkol Glacier.

We passed through the green wheat and pea fields and saw several field larks and wagtails.

The sun was ten cubits above the setting horizon; and it was shining on the slope of the mountain facing the Suru river. The scanty green vegetation on the brown background appeared like the eye of a peacock's feather.

When we passed by the village the inhabitants came out to see us with curious wondering eyes.

There is a primary school. The teacher was enjoying French leave in Zañskár eight stages from here, hence the school was closed. The boys did not know the name of their master. The children looked like young chimpanzees.

The women do all the work . . . they sow, reap, mow the corn, and gather wood for winter. They place a goat skin on their backs and carry loads in their wickerwork baskets on their backs. The men sit and idle away the day in gossip. They have a wooden spindle on which they spin rough yarn from rough wool and of this yarn they make sacks. Some men go to Simla for coolie work during the winter. Most of them are Mohammadans of the Shia sect.

August 6th. We went for a walk to Perkhachik. We crossed the bridge and climbed the ridge to have a clear view of the Nun Khun. Where water comes out of the mountain, the slope yields rich vegetation, otherwise it is barren. From the top one

can have a clear view of the Nun Khun with its great glacier with dreadful open crevasses. I suppose this glacier once reached Suru, but now holds the skirt of the Nun Khun and gives rise to the Suru river. The whole Suru valley appears like a green field with some 20 scattered villages. Tungul lies on the bend of the Suru hidden in one of the corners of the valley. We had with us Rahima the old man who climbed the Nun peak with Mr. Bullock Workman. Dr. A. Neve first climbed the Nun up to 18,000 ft. Sillem climbed 19,000 ft., and discovered a snow plateau near the peaks. This snow plateau, according to Mr. Bullock Workman, is three miles long, one mile and a half broad and is surrounded by seven peaks. The highest is 23,467 ft. This plateau feeds three glaciers, the Shafat glacier, the Faridabád glacier, and the Ganri glacier which lies on the south west skirt of the Nun Khun and ends in a sharp tongue in the Suru river. The Workman expedition camped three days on this snow plateau and Mrs. B. Workman climbed the second highest Nun peak, a pinnacle peak (23,300 ft.)—a woman's record ascent. We had a grand view of the glacier from the Perkhachik La.

Suru is the meeting place of several routes. One on the North goes to Kargil, one on the west goes to Kashmir, the other goes to Zañskár. The birds observed were, a red-billed chough, wagtails, Hodgson's pipits and an ibis bill.

August 7th. Started from Suru late in the morning. In some places the road is well shaded by the willow trees. The land is rendered fertile by the industrious women-folk, who use a mixture of earth and cowdung as fertilizers of their sandy soil. In this barren region when there is water either from a glacier or from a spring, you will find an oasis. On the way you will see the women hard at work in their fields.

We had our morning meal at a spring, the water of which was very pure and sweet. The road runs along the left bank

of the Suru river. It is a good pony track. The rushing and noisy river water is dirty and full of sand.

We arrived at Sanko. The river is about a mile from this place. We pitched our tent in an orchard near the inn. There is an aqueduct through the camping ground, but it was dry at that time. In this country it is a law that every family has to send by turns two men to the inn to look after the visitors. These are called Racepa. We promised bakhshis to these Racepas if they went to get water, but they hesitated. Afterwards they were made to go. The water flowed to this aqueduct, but again it ran dry. So we went to the river to get water. If you strain the river water even a score of times it will still have sand and fine mica-dust in it, but we boiled some water and drank it.

Sanko is a large well cultivated village. Here we saw a good number of birds. The red browed finch, red-capped finch, blue-capped finch with orange under parts and red tail, hoopoes, Suru magpies, skylarks, Hodgson's pied wagtail, meadow bunting, white-throats and of course house sparrows.

August 8th. We rose early in the morning for another stage. All along the road we heard the query of the rose-finch *'which it, which you'* to which we answered: 'Mission School teachers'. I wonder if those people, among whom it lives, ever answer its question, but I fear they do not understand English. The mountain slopes of these parts are destitute of vegetation. These parts are pleasant for a botanist, more pleasant for a naturalist, and most pleasant for a geologist. Hence you can see which element predominates here. From Sanko the geological structure of rocks changes, the mica is not to be found in the rocks.

There is a fine spring at a place 6 miles below Sanko. This place is called Khacheon. It has also a willow orchard. We had our morning meal here. This grove is a resort of various finches. Their music was so sweet that even Orpheus would have lost himself in ecstasy.

Leaving the place we passed along the slope and came to a great treeless plateau. It is like a miniature Sahara. On our right and left were the sandy mountains, while we were walking on the sandy soil. The sun was hot. What a contrast to the white surface of the Sagar-Nôr pass! This plateau used to be the polo ground for the Baltis. When Dr. Neve traversed this part of the country this ground was covered with shady trees, now it is treeless. Leaving this we came to a village with trees and wheat fields. 'After pain there cometh gain'. Here we took shelter and rest after burning heat.

We came to Tsaluskot. It is a large well cultivated village. The irrigation system arranged by the people is wonderful and praiseworthy. The place is the wheat granary of this region. People from Zañskár and Leh come there to buy grain. They are all Shias. There are in this locality a school and a mosque, the latter being plastered with mud and decorated with a lattice window (a rare thing in such parts). I wonder if the people ever think when offering their prayers in the mosque to make their body the temple for the Lord God to live in and thereby show love to their fellow-men.

They thought us to be officers going on an important business. Little did they think that the visitors to their village were the masters of a great school which inculcates in boys the two great maxims: (1) Love thy God (2) Love thy neighbour as thyself.

We did not stop here, because the water was dirty. We marched 3 miles on to Trinsphone and pitched our tent in a willow grove surrounded by water which is transparent, sweet like nectar, gushing out of a celestial fountain.

The houses are better built than those of Suru. They have stone foundations and a superstructure of unbaked heavy bricks. In some places poplars are planted and their wood is used in building houses. Here we saw yaks (beasts of burden) with

bushy tails coming from Leh. They have a hole in their nose and a wicker-work ring is put in that hole, and it serves as a sort of rein.

Several mountain doves and Hodgson's pipits were seen.

August 9th. Started off early in the morning, after having a cup of tea. We discovered that to walk in the hot weather it is a good plan to rise early and have the midday meal near some, fresh spring, after taking a bath which keeps one fresh while walking in the sun. We stopped at Chutuk for our repast. There are several tiny springs here. We left Chutuk after 3 p.m. Half a mile on, two spurs of mountains on opposite sides almost meet, hardly leaving space for the river to flow through. We passed this narrow pass and entered into another sandy and rocky plain. Rocks were on our right and left. The sun was burning overhead, while the hot sand was under our feet. The whole place may be compared to a burning oven or it may be a park in Hades. Everything seemed to emit fire. Traversing these places we came to a village with shady trees; there to my surprise we found a golden oriole. What made it leave the paradise-like banks of the Dal it is difficult to tell. Probably either it was an exile or a renegade from its community.

We always found a village after a wild rocky tract. We arrived at Kargil. It is the centre of the district. It lies on both the banks of the river, and is the meeting place of three routes. One goes to Zañskár, the other crossing the suspension bridge goes to Yarkand via Leh, while the third goes to Skardo, three miles below Kargil across the Dras river. Commercially it is very poor. The things sold in the Bázör are salt, raw sugar, tobacco, tea, pins, rough embroidery from Kashmir and other things. They say rock salt cures stomach ache. A kind of salt is found in these parts.

We met an old student, the postmaster, who received us hospitably and gave us a room to lodge in. We visited the

school. The teacher was drilling boys in the multiplication tables. The boys have regular features and are unlike the Suru boys. For the night we slept on the roof of the post office.

August 10th. We left Kargil late in the morning. Three miles from Kargil the Dras river joins the Suru river and now the road goes along the right bank of the Dras river. At Thusgám the road crosses a bridge and keeps to the left bank of the river. We had our morning meal at Chanagund in a garden where we saw some apricot trees. At various places gardens have been planted for travellers to take rest under the shade in these dreary parts. This place is six miles away from Kargil.

Left the place at 2 p.m. The sun was blazing, the rocks were like cinders, the sand was like sparks of fire, and we were walking on it. It reminded me of those brave persons who have traversed deserts like the Sahara, Kalahari, Atacama and the Australian deserts. We had to trudge round hundreds of spurs zigzags and windings, ups and downs, meanderings and circuits, ascents and descents, which tired us till we reached Kharbo 15 miles away from Kargil. The village is situated on the plateau, while the Dak Bungalow is on the roadside. For want of sweet water we did not stop here. We determined to go to Thusgam which we were told was only 3 miles away but was really 6 miles from Kharbo. Fortunately we met a man who arranged for our milk and fuel in the dark night. R. N. burnt the hair of his arm while managing the hearth, I had a slight rheumatic pain in my knee; otherwise we were all right. We did not pitch our tent. We thought it better to sleep under the shady willows. The cooing of the doves, the rustling of the leaves, the murmuring of the stream was Nature's lullaby to hush us to sleep.

August 11th. Before sunrise we left Thusgam. The vegetation on the slopes became visible, Pencil cedars and wild roses of stunted growth began to appear. A flock of wild ibex was seen frisking over the naked cliffs. The mountains are low

and the sky seems to open. Valley after valley appears with hills and hillocks detached from the main range. We saw several flocks of finches and a number of sky larks, soaring and singing, singing and soaring. Redstarts were common. On the road there is a statue either of a god or of an old king. We came to Dras. It is 9,950 ft. high. A winter temperature of $-15°$F. has been recorded. The climate is dry. The winds always blow after 2 p.m.

Here is also an observatory. P. Shivji Warikoo an old student in charge of the State Telegraph Office made everything easy for us.

School boys were playing foot-ball. When R. N. kicked the ball they all were wonderstruck and said, 'O God, what a gigantic kick!' They belong to the Dard tribe and speak Dardi.

August 12th. We had our food here and left at about 10 a.m. The road keeps on the left bank of the Dras river. The mountain slopes become greener and greener. Here and there are seen boys and women cutting long grass for their goats. We arrived at Pañdras. It is in the centre of the valley. Here are several water mills. The wind blew hard and several times carried off our headgear. A bridge took us to the right bank of the river which becomes narrower and narrower. We arrived at Matayan. The clouds shaded us from the hot sun. It began drizzling. From here the ruby-red slopes of mountains change into emerald green. The silvery white rills of water issuing out of the ice and snow, winding about in serpentine courses amidst the verdant slopes, look very fascinating. Here cows, oxen, mares, horses, sheep and buffaloes are busy grazing. They do not raise their heads to look at passers-by. Everywhere the flowers in opal-like colours decorate the valley. The people speak Balti and Kashmiri. Their hovels are not more than two yards high. The roofs are flat. Only an Eskimo could understand their condition in winter when the snowfall is heavy. The temporary

huts of bakörbáns are like the conical huts of Samoyeds. They come here for the summer months.

Minimarg is a wonderful flower-land. Here we ascended and came to Matsehoi. Here is a State telegraph office for winter months. Round about are several glaciers which are the source of the Dras river. There is also a big glacier which I think extends as far as Gumbar. Several white-backed vultures were hovering over the mountains. At sunset the surface of the glacier became a gilt sheet of silver with grooves.

August 13th. We saw a pair of snow-pigeons near the Matsehoi glacier. We left Matsehoi after having our meal. The road goes over a meadow. At Gumbar there is a stream of water. It probably comes out of one end of the Matsehoi glacier. The stream does not appear to be glacial water. It is of a milky white colour and the silt is like white ashes. From here a road runs to Amar Náth. It is difficult and lies over the glaciers. Beyond this is a small waterfall which is the source of the Sind river which joins the Amarovati stream from Amar Náth at Báltal.

The Zoji La pass (10,500 ft.) was covered with flowers. On either side of the path amidst the birch trees the flowers of diverse colours spread over the mountain slope for lookers-on to praise the skilful hand of the Creator. After birch trees we entered the coniferous belt and here we had a glorious view of the Sind valley. Even a poet would fail to describe this romantic scenery.

We rested at the foot of the Zoji La, where sweet water was gushing out, and had some tea. Here barley and wheat fields were green. When we entered Sona Marg it was drizzling.

August 14th. Sona Marg (9,000 ft.) (*golden meadow*) is one of the most charming places in Kashmir. It is said that there lies somewhere concealed a well, the water of which has the property of changing anything into gold.

August 15th. Halt at Sona Marg. A quest for the well. Several European rollers sitting on the telegraph wire, wagtails and the common sand-pipers were seen.

August 16th. Left Sona Marg at 1.30. It was still drizzling. A few miles on is Hung. The road has been cut out of the stony slope of the mountain; hence it is very bad. The horses coming from opposite directions should pass one another carefully: if they slightly push one another, one of them is bound to fall over the precipice into the roaring Sind. This stony road is about 3 miles in length. Near Ganginagir (7,700 ft.) the deciduous belt begins and maize fields and rice fields appear. The road rises high over the mountain slope; the view of the lower portion is magnificent. The sky was covered with clouds, and clouds rested on the tops of the mountains. There was a fine belt-like sheet of clouds dividing the coniferous and deciduous belts. The coniferous belt appeared dark green, the deciduous belt green, and the fields below light green, while the Sind looked like a fretted sheet of crystal. The autumnal colours must be grand here.

We reached Kulun. Here meets a road from Pahalgám via Yemher (13,400 ft.). It began to rain hard. The road passes over the yellow soil, hence the mud is sticky. Every step lifted with it at least 2 lb. of mire, and our headgears were dripping. We halted at Gund. During the night Kishiv Ram, a local shopkeeper, told us tales hardly to be believed. He had visited several lakes and meadows and told us that somewhere near Vishna Sar there was a herb which made a noise during the night and that a certain lake contained one-eyed fishes and so on.

August 17th. Raining. Halt after double marches.

August 18th. Left Gund early in the morning. The road runs amidst the rice and maize fields. The rice fields are arranged in terrace cultivation. We observed a number of birds

—rollers, brown doves, the large brown dipper, the cinnamon-headed sparrow, wagtails, the golden oriole, the grey tit, the hoopoe, the kite and the idle-school-boy. The Gujars living here amidst the maize fields are ferocious and for public safety it is a great thing to keep them in check. They rob the wayfarers when they find a chance. Near Ganiwon we had our food. Here a bridge crosses the river. Near Kangan we saw a ruby-throat. M. Shah, an old student, in charge of the police station, was overjoyed when he saw us and he helped us in every way.

August 19th. The valley opens from Vusan. It appears like a full bloomed lotus having the fort as the lotus seed-pod and the mountain peaks around like the tips of lotus petals. The wildness of nature changes into calmness and tranquillity.

Here the din of the roaring torrents, the bright snowy surface of the high passes, the frowning crevasses of the glaciers, the red rough rocks of barren mountains, the verdure of meadows the colours of fragrant flowers and the azure blue water of lakes, pass before my mind's eye.

And they manifest the skilful hand of the Creator Who loves us and Who has spread all these things for us. Should we not in response love Him and thank Him and love our fellow brethren as we love ourselves?

13. GANGABAL LAKES

What a peaceful abode one finds when surrounded by nature! She presents the fascinating living picture of beauty in the form of first elements, unadulterated by man's ingenious brain. Such a spot is Gangabal, where the newspaper cannot easily find its way.

After loading 23 ponies with all the necessaries for trekking, the whole caraván of the Cashmir Climbing Club passed through the Vusan village where the route branches off towards the left from the main road. Following for some time the Brahma Sar torrent we came to a grove of plane trees growing on the bank of the stream. Indigofera heterantha (kats) and wild mulberries were very common. A flock of starlings flew past us. We camped at Rama Rádan (Rama Arádan). It is said that here Rámá worshipped Shiva in order to restore to life his brother Bharat who lost his breath in penance.

Next morning on the 19th July, we started early to climb the Bharat Bál. The path is a pony track passing through wild walnuts and chestnuts. There is another track going along the ravine but this is steep and not fit for pack ponies. We heard the calls of tits from pines and saw a Kashmir redstart flying out of a birch tree. Walking leisurely, the lame ducks of the party took about eight hours to make the ascent. The tents were pitched at Málish. It is a meadow above the tree region where no fuel is obtainable. Two water rills drain it. Phlomis spectabilis and red-billed choughs were common.

The moonrise was gorgeous. In the northern sky the Pole Star with the Great Bear and the Little Bear, in the East Aquila

with Altair, the brightest star, and Scorpio with its twisted tail in the South were conspicuous constellations.

We had a morning walk round the place. Near the rill close to our kitchen tent we found Corydalis Govaniana in seed. When we touched the seed pod, it burst and hurled the seed to a distance. The flower is yellow and has a sweet perfume. Towards the Eastern margin of the place among the rocks overlooking the Wangat Náĺlah, we found Phlomis spectabilis, Geum elatum, Androsaca sarmentosa, Anemone tetrasepala, Macrotomia Benthami, Meconopsis aculeata (blue poppy) and other Alpine flowers. Near water Caltha pallustris was common.

In the afternoon we struck our tents. The path runs over meadows where hundreds of sheep can be seen grazing. Brahma Sar is a shallow lake at the foot of Hamsa Dwar (13,469 ft.). Here the path diverges. One towards the left goes over level ground, the other passes over Hamsa Dwar (Swan gate). A party along with the pack ponies followed the former, while most preferred to cross the mountain. It is all boulders. In between are green patches where we found Geum, Primula nivalis, several species of Sedum, Anemone, Gentian, Swertia (Mumran), Corydalis, Draba and Androsace. On the top there is a cleft (Barnibal) through which we passed. In the shade we found Cortusa matthioli with moderately lobed round leaf, and in a niche in a rock a cluster of Paraquilegia with beautiful blue flowers. The Eastern slope was covered with Geum, Saxifraga ligulata (Zákhmi Hayát), Inula Royleana (Poshkar) of orange colour and tansy.

When pilgrims cross the top of the mountain, they cry aloud the name of the departed soul whose ashes they carry. From the top of the pass we saw the mountain peaks and the valley covered with snow. There were also two lakes, one half-frozen and the other of a light green colour. We descended over the

the water, owing to the angular height of the sun make one spell-bound. The lake tapers towards the east.

We waded over to the southern shore of the lake where we found the cooking places of pilgrims. All rites and ceremonies for the departed souls are performed on this side and not on the other. Some of us took a canoe and paddled over to the other bank, where we had a talk with a shepherd, while the others strolled by the south-western shore over the beds of Geum elatum, Pottentila, Phlomis, Pedicularis brevifolia (Kusturi) and other Alpine varieties. No juniper was found. We walked to the place where the stream from the glaciers enters the lake. There was a time when the glacier reached the shore of the lake, but now it has receded and clings high up on the mountain.

The clouds gathered and veiled the mountains around. Some of us sat on a rock in the water with a scooped niche to have our tea. Rain began to pour, followed by a hail storm. The water drops from the lake leaped to kiss the pearls which fell as hail-stones from the blue dome. This was not all. Even the hail-stones found their way into the tea cups and tea drops jumped into our mouths. We saw a yellow wagtail and several meadow buntings near by. We returned drenched to the camp.

There is a scarcity of fuel near the lakes. All wood has to be brought from lower down. A party went down to collect dry wood from the fir and the juniper bushes. In the centre of the northern aspect of the mountain there was a quartz surface (Zak Mak) where there were no trees. Everyone carried back a load of wood and returned back by another meadow in which we found a shepherd with his family sheltering under his sheet and turning it into a tent. Two old trunks of trees still standing reminded us of the once birch-covered slopes of this valley called Pötri Pather. Several flocks of choughs flew over our heads.

Another party went round the shoulder between Nund Kol and Gangabal and found a large bed of Meconopsis aculeata

(*blue poppy*) among the boulders. On one of these we counted sixty-two buds and seven flowers in bloom; while others going round Nund Kol brought back a specimen of Morina longifolia (Kandchar) with long, narrow, prickly leaves having spiny teeth. It had rose pink and white flowers. The root of this plant is mixed with Jurinea macrocephala (Dhup) by the Ladakhis and burnt as incense.

Most impressive was the panorama from a platform towards the Gangabal side of the green knoll behind our camp, where one could see the hoary head of Harmoukh rising a sheer precipitous height of five thousand feet above the lake. Under the awe-inspiring face of the mountain lie Nund Kol and Gangabal like two glittering blue eyes adorned with green floral eyebrows —nature's wondrous a spectacle nowhere to be surpassed.

The clouds were hanging low on the morning of the 23rd July and others were sweeping up the valley. At about noon a party left to climb a peak opposite to the lake. When they ascended high up over the edge of the ridge consisting of rocks and loose stones the mist caught them, so much so, that they could not see beyond their noses. They stopped. It was interesting to observe how condensation took place on the bare head of a trekker who, although in his teens, appeared three score years old with a hoary head.

We descended by another ravine over a steep slope covered to some extent with vegetation. In the shady nooks we found Cortusa matthioli, Primula nivalis, P. reptans and Paraquilegia. The valley was covered with stones. Avoiding these we came to the western shore of Gangabal when it began to rain hard.

The morning of 24th, was again cloudy. We had been experiencing for the last three days the continuous filling of valleys with clouds, instalment after instalment, veiling the mountain ranges. Probably they were the products of the monsoon winds covering the Himalayan outer ranges. The winds when they

strike against mountains are forced to rise high. When they rise they expand, their temperature decreases and they fall as rain.

About 10 a.m., the sky began to show signs of clearance. We had decided to return via Lolagul (*beloved mouth*) pass (13,000 ft.) or Tsora Lat and Tri Sangam to Bandipur, but the shepherd for the sake of the ponies did not advise us to go that way on account of several miles of boulders.

We struck our tents, loaded our ponies, bade goodbye to Gangabal and started by the usual path. At Trön khal (*field of grass*) which is four miles from the lake there is a forest hut. Alderberry was common. There was a spring amid a group of fir trees. The path runs to Poshi Matun in moderate ascents and descents. A spring crowns the top of Bhot Sher (*Bhuti Shwar*) from which a descent of 4,000 ft. begins. The rocks are of sedimentary slate.

On our right were several fields of Phlomis spectabilis and on the left there were bushes with cherry-like blossom. Solitary specimens of blue poppy, Inula Royleana were among these. A large space was covered with Codnopsis ovata. In two places the path was so bad that the ponies had to be unloaded and the load had to be carried by the pony men. Lower down we walked among pines emitting a sweet scent. The view of the dense forest and of the distant green valley drained by the Kranka Nadi was charming. The rocks at the lower part of the mountain differed from those at the top. The last batch of trekkers arrived late at Nárán Nág (Sodara Tirtha) where the party halted for the night.

Here are old ruins, pavements, temples, tanks, all made of huge stones built by Lalitaditya and dedicated to Bhutishwar Mahádiv. These were probably cut from the neighbouring mountain spur and laid with wondrous skill. Some believe that people of that age knew the art of melting and casting stones

just as we do today in the case of cement. It is said that this art was known throughout the world. The Ancas of Mexico, Old Romans, Egyptians and Indians knew this art. The engineering skill of lifting heavy stones was also known to them. Here is a bath cast or carved out of a block about 16 feet long, 7 feet broad and 5 feet high.

There is also a spring which is regarded as holy. A farmer told me that he, with ten others, entered the passage from which water beneath the mountain flows into the spring. They had torches with them. When they had gone about 10 yards they heard the tremendous noise of water rushing towards them from all directions. They got frightened and retreated. The restoration and excavation of such a place would be of great historical importance.

Early next morning we started after tea and had our breakfast on the bank at Kachi Nambal (swamp of grass) about four and a half miles from Nárán Nág. The Kranka Nadi which drains the Nárán Nág valley empties itself into the Sind at Prang. Prang means a throne. It is said that when Kashap Reshi drained the Sati Sar (Kashmir Valley) he sat down here on the throne to witness the ebbing water of the lake.

It is here that the path meets the general road and now wheeled traffic runs as far as Baltal. The Nárán Nág valley is also called Wangat Nállah and is a favourite spot for trout fishing.

Near Wayil, not very far from the road, there was a dispensary under the supervision of Miss A. E. Wishart. It commands an attractive view.

14. ERIN VALLEYS

The expedition to Harmoukh was undertaken under the auspices of the Cashmir Climbing Club and it was the desire of the President F. Jacob Esq., to make an attempt on one of its peaks. The party started in a houseboat moving downwards on the Vetasta (Jhelum). Skilfully hovering on its wings over the water in order to detect its prey, the pied kingfisher was carrying on its usual trade. The blue kingfisher was not less busy. The boat stopped at Shala Teng to wait for Mr and Mrs Eric Tyndale-Biscoe and their party.

The dawn of July 10th found our boats gliding on the river with the current. The whiskered terns were very busy carrying water weeds in their beaks from the river towards the marsh. Several fish eagles and jacanas were flying about. When the boats entered the lake we saw that the whole surface was covered with weeds. The golden (*Khor Posh*) Limnanthemum nymphacoides in full blossom gave an added grace to the lake. In order to reach the shore quickly we all paddled hard. There was a delightful patch of knot grass (Polygonum amphibium) and frogbit-Hydrocharis Morsus-ranae-(Bhoṭa Khor) as we drew near. We landed at Nōdhal. There is a spring here flowing under a spur of the mountain. There are also remains of a temple. Several images are carved out of the rocks.

It was here that a serious accident nearly took place during our Easter vacation. A leak was found in the hull of the 12 oared cutter while we were shoving her off with all the crew and passengers in her. It was dusk. Had the leak occurred in the middle of the lake, the Principal and his staff would have had very little hope of reaching the camp, as the water was bitterly cold.

The ponies were all loaded and we moved on. The path lay among the rice fields and willows, and mulberry trees were in large numbers. At Tsont Mul there is a spring and we halted there to have tea. There is a nice camping-ground here but it is near the village. We saw people drying cocoons in the sun. One of the occupations of the people is the rearing of silk worms.

As the path ascended higher and higher it passed through maize fields and a bush called köts (Indigofera hereanthra) with dark red-purple flowers was in full bloom. Here we heard a white throat and a bushchat warbling. On the way we were joined by an elderly American gentleman and his daughter who were also attempting the climb.

We camped at Kiudor although it was not a suitable spot for a big camp. We cleared a space for our tents. We envied the Gujars who lived here in their huts among the maize fields in the open air with the beautiful natural scenes lying at their feet; the silvery meandering course of the Erin in the midst of green herbage. On our way the bees kissed some of us on our foreheads and cheeks. A little-soothing balm removed the pain and swelling. What is love for one is hatred for the other.

Next morning after breakfast we started. The path went between pines and firs. Geranium and Aconitum peeped out of the bushes. Several plants of Skimmia laureola and Aquilegia jucunda were seen. A large number of fallen firs showed us the course of several avalanches in the valley. The previous winter a large number of people had been killed by them. Wherever we went we saw the damage done by these agents of Nature. Several streams from the right bank entered the Erin. At Ishran Tár a huge pine served as a bridge for crossing the stream. It reminded me of how Mr. R. D. Thompson used to cross such mountain bridges. It was difficult to cross with only one leg and crutches. So he made himself into a tripod and

crawled over to the other banks. Gunsa Pather (*the field of vipers*) was covered with ferns. The wild roses were lovely. The left bank of the Erin was covered with firs. There were several clusters of Inulas on the bank of the torrent. A tiger-butterfly was gaily flying about.

The meadow land begins from Minimarg. We found Lindelofia, wild iris and Euphorbia, and several white Aquilegias showed their graceful heads among the juniper bushes. The birch trees were of course plentiful. The range on the right is called Sawatha Range and there were some small glaciers on its southern slope.

We saw a couple of birds which we could not identify. One was rathrer smaller than a sparrow, of a blackish grey tint and with a red spot on its throat. It was not a ruby-throat.

We camped several hundred yards below Sarbal, in order to escape the wind. A party made their bed-room under a big rock. Such rocks which afford shelter in these latitudes are called *Pahl pal* (*shepherd's rock*) because herdsmen when pitching their tents generally choose such a spot for the site of their camp. In the afternoon we went to Sarbal (*shri—beautiful, bal—place*). It is a large lake, probably very deep. The eastern and southern shores are bounded by high and glacier-covered mountains with smooth slopes caused by weathering. We were told that a path over this mountain leads into Gangabal valley. Higher up the valley was covered with masses of flowers—Anemones, Androsace, Salvias, Sedums, Edelweiss and many others. There are two other small lakes. The bottom of one is slippery and beautifully paved with stones by nature. It is shallow. The other is called Shira Sar. It has two meanings. Shir in Persian means milk, hence milk lake. Shri means beautiful hence beautiful lake. Whatever the words signifies, it is one of the most beautiful nooks I have ever visited. It lies directly under the eastern peak of Harmoukh (16,872 ft.), a sheer perpendicular

cliff rising 4,000 ft. above the lake. On the western side is a ravine covered with snow which continues and covers half of the lake. There may be a path through this ravine on to an ice plateau and thence over the glacier to the summit of the peak. The water which flows down from the snow is of a diluted milky blue colour. The eastern bank is covered with charming floral beds. Salvia hians, Macrotomia benthami, Inulas and many more. What peace and tranquillity one experiences when seated among flowers, looking at wild nature, meditating on the subtleties of the Supreme Hand, forgetting one's self and merging one's divine ray into the divine Sun of the universe.

The water from these lakes enters Sarbal from there it flows to form the Erin stream. When returning to the camp we saw a windhover poised on its wings searching for its prey. It began to drizzle and rained during the night.

Shrouded in clouds were the mountains on the 18th of July. It was raining. The hoarse morning caw of the jungle crow was the only sign of bird life we heard. In the afternoon a party climbed a peak on the eastern side. The other climbed several hundred feet over a snow bed at the foot of the glacier towards the western side of Harmoukh. They found a pair of yellow-billed choughs. Mrs. Eric brought back from her walk a bunch of flowers in which we counted 40 different species. In the evening it cleared and preparation for the climb was made. Ice axes, ropes and staves were carefully examined. Every member carried a pair of grass sandals (a safe shoe for ice).

It was a perfect day for climbing. The party led by Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Tyndale-Biscoe with 14 members including Miss Saunderson started for the climb at 5 a.m. They left the snow bed on their right, walked over sand and shale till they reached the snow tongue over the margin of which they were near the base of the northern glacier. Here they succeeded in finding a gully through which they climbed to a still higher ledge. We

He went on doing this for 12 years. At the expiry of this time he saw a shepherd, descending from the mountain. *The Sadhu* asked him, 'Where have you been?' *Shepherd:* 'I have been in search of my lost sheep'. *Sadhu:* 'What did you see there?' *Shepherd:* 'I saw high up on the ice, a sweeper milking a cow'. *Sadhu:* 'What did he tell you?' *Shepherd:* 'He offered me milk to drink, but I refused because he was a sweeper. He sprinkled some on my face'. *Sadhu:* 'Ah! It was a god who appeared to you in the form of a sweeper'. Then the Sadhu stood up, licked off all the milk drops and disappeared.

It is also believed that a snake bite will be no longer poisonous when it comes within the sight of the Harmoukh peak.

The next morning the news ran through the camp that Mr. Jaçob was lost. Search parties were sent in every direction. Among the boulders, the junipers and birch trees, on the banks of the rushing torrent and the shore of the placid lake the air echoed with the cry of *'Mr. Jacob', 'Mr. Jacob', 'Mr. Jacob'*. After a long search we saw through binoculars a speck moving forward near the snow tongue, about half way up the Harmoukh slope near the glacier. So the knights-errants rushed to the rescue and Mr. Jacob was brought back to the camp under an escort, of course not in *golden chains*. Thereupon our chief, the good shepherd, gave three cheers for the finding of the smiling *lost sheep*.

In the afternoon we struck camp and descended to the lower part of Gunsa Pather. On the way we went through a field covered with several species of forget-me-nots. We found a delightful spot for camping. The deafening noise of the silvery torrent, the fragrant breeze through the pine needles, the enchanting loveliness of the several clusters of blue poppies under the rocks were some of the natural beauties of the camp. There we found Arisaema wallichianum and Arisaema tortuosum belonging to the Arum family. The former was of a dark [illegible] colour. The head of this plant exactly resembles a cobra's [illegible]

plants of Sassurea lappa (koṭh) were found here among the rocks. The extraction of the root of this plant is a State monopoly and is so valuable that many officials have lost their lives while trying to stop the smuggling of it.

The whistling thrush heralded the dawn of 21st July with its melodious notes. After having our breakfast, we struck camp and continued our descent. On the way we met a peasant who had cut his leg with his axe while getting branches from a mulberry tree for silk worms. Mr. Jacob had some potent balm in his knapsack which he applied and bound up the wound. Three weeks later when he re-visited the spot to make a second attempt at climbing the triangulation peak (16,000 ft.) *this time successful*, the brother of the injured man gave them a quantity of green peas as a token of gratitude for the speedy cure.

Mr. Jacob's ascent of this peak is a lesson for us all. An old man of over sixty, with slow and steady steps, believing in the motto *faint but pursuing* reached the top. An expert climber can easily climb a peak, but it is to his credit if he takes with him those who lag behind and encourages them every now and then. We spent the night outside the Erin village, by the side of the stream. There we took a last look at the massive peak which had greeted us in so friendly a fashion.

On Wednesday the 22nd of July we arrived very early at Nödhal. We paid off the ponymen; engaged four boats and started to cross the lake. It was pleasant to lounge at our ease and dream of a sea voyage from Calcutta to Rangoon. Generally the lake in the forenoon is calm. The reflection of the surrounding mountains in the lake, the water birds sailing on their wings through the air and the subdued light of the far off horned moon were agents to drive away all thoughts of fatigue. In four hours' time we landed at Sopor. There we engaged two lorries which deposited us in the man-made city of Srinagar, full of regrets that our enjoyable trek had come to an end.

15. GURAIS VALLEYS

This trip was undertaken under the auspices of the Alpine Flower Association, Mission School, organised by Mr. R. D. Thompson.

We engaged a tonga and left Srinagar on the 22nd July. A road branches off from the Jhelum Valley Road to Sumbal at the 4th milepost from Srinagar. The road was unmetalled, and owing to the previous night's rainfall, the going was bad. The pony had to drag the wheels out of the mud. The farms on both sides were covered with rapeseed and maize plants. We left the house-crows in Srinagar. They are confined to the town. We had a pause at Sumbal. Here the road crosses the bridge and passes along the banks of Mánasbal, a beautiful lake. Saffapor is a pretty village near the lake. A grand chinár grove has been planted here. In course of time it will be a rival to Naseem Bágh on the bank of the Dal. There were a number of bee-eaters perching on the telegraph wires. The peasants were weeding the rice fields. In order to lighten the tedium of their work they were singing in chorus. Beyond this village, the road turns round the spurs of mountains. What a picture of Nature's grandeur the mention of a mountain brings to one's mind! When covered with snow, mountains are the perennial source of rivers; they supply us with wood and fuel, modify the climate, and yield to man the vast treasures concealed in their depths. It was on the mountains-breathing the purity of nature—that commandments were given to the Law-giver, that the Transfiguration took place, that the Sermon which the whole world admires, was preached. Almost every high peak has been named after some god: Mahádiv, (the great god), Harmoukh (the face of the god of peace). Gwashibröri (Kolahoi) the

goddess of light. When one climbs to their summits, one finds oneself above the dense atmosphere below, in the rarified air nearer the Divine glory. One feels that the Lord is the life and light of all the wondrous world we see.

There are six long spurs, which project into the Wular lake and from which it recedes further and further every year. The road winds about over these spurs. In some place it is dangerous. We alighted a score of time from the tonga. In fact every time the shafts went up we got out hastily.

The driver was a jolly fellow. He had a scar on his left cheek. When he laughed his comical appearance made us laugh too, so we made him laugh during the whole of the journey.

The Eastern shores of the lake are being silted up. A number of whiskered-terns was flying and dipping to catch fish. In the days gone by the people had a great dread of this lake. If a bridegroom crossed, he had to put down his crest of plumes, symbol of royalty—for in one domain, as was said, two Rájas could not rule—one the bridegroom, the other the Wular Raja. They also used to offer rice and sugar candy near the spring where the water bubbles out. This dread was dispelled in 1906 when three teachers under the leadership of the coxswain of the Cambridge University winning boat of 1886 swam the lake. The first swam 2 miles, but being demoralised by the dread of the so-called lake monsters gave in; the second an expert swimmer smoked a drug to keep his energy, swam three miles and then instead of going forward, swam backwards and then being exhausted gave up; the third Mr. Darim Chand under the guidance of his master crossed the lake. Many teachers and boys have swum the lake since with great ease. The bosom of the lake is the sporting ground for our Easter vacation holiday-makers. Of course at times when strong winds blow the lake is dangerous.

When we arrived at lower Saidnor, the driver told us that in olden times earthen pots were so scare here that one day, as the story goes, a woman's hand getting entangled in a pitcher, her arm was cut off to save the pitcher.

From here onwards there are wild pomegranate trees on either side of the road. Several plants of Arum Moorcraftiana were found growing under these. We arrived very late at Bandipore. The noise from the neighbouring chinars on which there is a colony of common herons was heard during the night.

On the 23rd August we went to the Tehsil where we had a talk with the Tehsildar who seemed to be a broadminded man. He told us how he had passed over several glaciers using planks to cross crevasses. We saw several common sand-pipers flying very close to the water of the Madumati stream. The other stream is the Erin Nálah which comes out of the Harmoukh glaciers. We went to the Forest Office to enquire about Captain Steane. The office is at Chatternar in the midst of blue pines, commanding a fine view. There we heard the noise of the Himálayan black bulbuls with red beak and claws. On August 24th we started early for Trágabal. It is 12 miles from Bandipor. Matrigam is at the foot of the pass. The Trágabal hill is sparsely covered with blue pines. Sometimes we ascended by the foot-path and sometimes by the general road which is longer. We had our morning meal under one of the trees. We reached the top and pitched our small tent under the pines.

Trag—fissure, bal—place. It is 9,500 ft. high and leads to the Gurais Valley. There are several small plateaux on the summit. We saw a number of tourists from the plains.

The view was charming. In the distance was the Pantsal 'whose peaks projecting from a great depth of mist looked like the mountains of another world'. The Vetasta in a serpentine course empties itself into the Wular and flows on to water the thirsty plains of India. The valley itself slumbers in calm repose.

On the morning of 26th August we left Trágabal. The whole mountain was wrapped in a mantle of fog. Not a glimpse of the distant mountains could be had and one could only see within a radius of 5 yards. Beyond Haft Kalan several birds were observed alighting on the ground. A number of turtle-doves was feeding near the road. Rugh Nath saw a pair of birds coming out of the top of a silver fir. He climbed to see the nest, but alas, no nest was there. There was a red-browed finch on the top of a dry fir. On a clear day the view from the Razdánángan (11,930 ft.) is one of the finest in Kashmir.

'To the north rises the great mountain Nanga-Parbat, to the north-east Harmoukh (16,872 ft.) to the west range upon range of the snow of Khagan, Shamshibri and Kajinág, to the south and south-east five peaks of Pir-Pantsál, from Soondri 12,700 ft. overlooking the Banahal and Mohu passes, to Apharwaṭ's ridge, 13,542 ft., above Gulmarg, one can sit and gaze for hours at such views'.

At Hochi Tuj the coniferous belt ends; grassy meadows begin. We began to pluck flowers for pressing. At Pánzal the top of the pass is exposed, and naturally the wind blowing over it is very strong. It is said that once the wind hurled a dog from here into the Loláb valley. We left the Gilgit road on our right and took the Chilas road. This road passes between 11,000 and 12,000 ft. At places we saw the blue poppy in the rocks and in the juniper bushes. Walking some five miles on the road, we left it on our left and descended by the Gosai galli (11,160 ft.) into the Gosai valley. We pitched our tent and began to cook our food for the morning meal. It was 1.30 p.m. There was perfect silence and even the streams which rise from the surrounding green slopes flowed quietly through the middle of this vale. 'Caw', the cry of the impudent jungle-crow, was the only noise heard. Gosai is the meeting place of four roads, Trágabal to Bagtore and Gurais to Loláb across the Myangul Galli (11,200

ft.). Captain Steane had left word for us, with Rahim Loan the Forest Guard of Gosai, to remove the camp to Kuragbal or Kazalwan as we preferred. We welcomed the news and hurriedly having our meals and pressing our flowers, packed our things and moved towards Kazalwan. The whole slope on the left was covered with beautiful flowers. Goldfinches, and meadow-buntings were disporting themselves among the floral vegetation. I was surprised to find a jungle crow right inside this beautiful park. What right had he to hide here in his black uniform? He was no black-coated policeman to protect the small innocent members of the aerial realm, but was there to eat their eggs and young ones.

At Gurai the road meets the one from Gilgit. Once a rest house stood here, but it has been destroyed by an avalanche. Now the rest house stands at Khuragbal. The Gosai stream meets another here and two others in silvery streaks descend down the northern slope to feed the main stream. The southern aspect is covered in patches with Artemisia (*Mareen*) from which santonin is extracted. The people here often collect Artemisia from the mountain slopes. The quantity collected is sealed in bags and sent to Baramulla where it is now manufactured.

We did not stop at Khuragbal, but descended to Kazalwan which lies at the confluence of the Gosai stream and the Krishen Gangá. Here we met Pt. Dina Nath Dullu our old student who was in charge of the Artemisia. There were some other friends with him. They gave us a cordial welcome.

On the 27th August we pitched our tent on the bank of the Gosai stream. A Himalayan brown dipper was engaged in eating insects in the stream. A plumbeous red-start was chasing gnats. The morning of the 28th found us bathing in the Kishen Gangá. On the opposite bank there was a bird's nest in the niche of an overhanging rock. One of us threw a stone on the rock. The bird flew out. It was a Himálayan whistling thrush. The nest looked just like a cup. After some moments

both the male and the female appeared. One sat in the nest, probably to incubate the eggs and the other stood on the rock like a sentinel on guard. How charming is the whistle-like note of this bird, and how hoarse is the alarm note of the same bird! Blessed are those people who always try to utter sweet expressions to mitigate the anxieties and worries of a sufferer.

In the afternoon of August 29th we went for a walk to Bagtore, a village west of Kazalwan on the Kishen-Ganga. When we had gone a few yards towards it, we sat down to have a view of the village. In the distance was a bridge over the Kishen-Ganga, which flows from the east. The right slope of the mountain was covered with Artemisia. On the south flows the Gosai stream, clear of sand particles, while in the centre of the small valley amidst the buckwheat and pea-fields rise 8 or 9 wooden houses. The beams are joined together by wooden pegs, the seams are plastered with mud. This village bears some similarity to Sukhnis in Wardwon valley. For some time we walked through sky-kissing blue pines. How bracing and fragrant is the breeze that blows here! In looking for a nest in these tall trees one's headgear would easily blow off if one did not hold it tight. We emerged into a miniature prairie ringed round with pines. At the foot of this plateau there is the village of Bagtore. The same wooden structures meet the eye. The *Zaildar's* (Head man of several villages) mansion is a big building surrounded by small huts. There is a stone wall outside the village. Here are seen flags waving in the breeze. It is the tomb of a certain saint. Whenever any one finds his wishes granted, he hoists a flag there. Here also is a forest hut.

On the 30th August we started for Gurais. It is about 12 miles from the camp. The road crosses to the right bank. The whole of the left bank is sparsely covered with cypress trees. At five miles from Kazalwan another road leads through a thick forest into Budwon, but we kept to the right bank. It was

here that we found Dictamnus albus (burning bush). The leaves of this bush contain an oily substance; if one shakes it, and supplies a light, the whole bush bursts into a flame. We found the nest of a white-capped redstart high up in a cliff. At 10.15 we sat down near a spring on the right bank of the river and had our repast. Further up there is a suspension bridge leading into Gurais. There were several girls crossing it. They had baskets of wicker-work on their heads. One of them lost her balance and found her basket floating in the river, while the others laughed when they saw it whirling in the eddy. It is a great thing not to laugh at the misfortunes of others. We crossed the bridge and enquired about Mr. Robertson's school. It was closed for the first Saturday in the month. We went round the village; the houses are made entirely of wood. They stand in rows and leave heaps of cow-dung etc., etc., close by. They are huddled together, probably as a safeguard against winter when the snow is deep. In the middle on a mound is the Tehsil building where the Naib Tehsildar lives. It commands a panorama of the valley. The people call it the fort. We visited the fort and had tea with some of our friends there. When we urged them to let us go without tea, one of them remarked, 'Well, gentlemen, if you don't stay here for tea, I shall arrest you under section so and so, Indian Penal Code, as vagabonds and convey you to Srinagar for identification'. We passed through pea, buck-wheat and barley fields. The buck-wheat was in blossom. The whole place was covered with pink and white blossoms which resembled the flowers of Merino longifolio. We met Mr. Robertson near the post office. He has a school there. He told us that in winter some 54 boys attended the school and only 18 in summer. In summer they are busy collecting Artemisia; they also earn money by coolie work. The men wear a loose woollen *pheron* and the women wear a head-gear something like a hat. The latter decorate their pheron with rings and round pieces of brass, probably imitating medals.

ably a rock crop. In this range there are several passes, one is Myangul Galli and the other is Hant Galli. A path goes to Loláb via Myangul Galli. We could see a part of the Loláb valley from here. A griffon vulture flew past us.

About 4 p.m., we began to descend. After going three miles rain and a hailstorm caught us and we took a shorter but steeper path which shepherds generally use. A shepherd was feeding his flock on one of these slopes. The sheep under the pouring rain were moving in parallel rows along the green slope. The bleating of lambs for their mothers, the pattering of rain on the leaves, the pealing of the thunder and the squelching of our steps on the muddy soil made a strange combination of sounds. The sandals which we wore were generally made of untanned leather. They became as soft as kneaded flour. At the foot of this hill near a snow bed we found the P. rosea in flower. It is remarkable that in this valley this plant is seeding in the southern corner while still in flower in the northern corner. A special kind of mushroom is used here as an article of food. All wet and tired we reached the camp. We lit a fire to prepare our food. How nice it would have been if human ingenuity had invented some sort of pill which would maintain energy and arrest hunger for at least a week, nothing else being needed by way of food. During the night a horse came several times to lick our pots and Rugh Nath had to keep a stick in his hand to drive the animal away. It was old and had been turned out on the common to graze.

It rained on the 3rd August. Lalaji came to us several times to see whether we were comfortable. During the night the horse came again to inspect the kitchen. After examining the utensils, he poked his head into the tent. There he pulled out a bag in which there were two smaller ones containing ground pulses and cakes. How he managed to undo the knots of the small bags is a mystery. We ran after him several times with

a stick, but he always found his way back to the door. So noisy was our laughter during the night that the sleep of Lalaji was disturbed, for which we apologised.

On the 4th August Lalaji left for Srinagar. He had to go to Gulmarg and to the Amar Nath (immortal lord) cave. He left with us Rahima the guard of the koṭh plantation to help us in time of need and to look after our things. Lalaji is a perfect gentleman and a sympathetic teacher. We were very thankful to him. During the day time the horse again paid us a visit. We took some of the remaining cakes in a dish and offering these besought him not to disturb us during the night. He bowed his head and never worried us again.

It rained on August 5th and we passed the day in studying the 'Wild Flowers of Kashmir' by Mr. B. O. Coventry. In the afternoon we collected some seeds of Caltha palustris and cut wood from the forest for our fire.

On August 6th at the request of R. Mahboob Wali our old student, we left a part of our luggage with a milkman at Gorai and carried with us the tent and other light impedimenta. R. Mahboob insisted on our leaving everything at Gorai and carrying nothing but the bedding. He also told us that the Numberdár of Bagtor would help us in every way as he was his friend and we his friend's friends, so we left about 11 a.m., came to Kazalwan, had our tea with our friends and then made for Bagtor. It was dusk when we arrived. We sent word to the Numberdár that we, his friend's friends, were come. We waited and waited. After some time a man with piercing blue eyes with a purple cap on his head, a heavy blanket wrapped over his loose woollen cloak and clogs on his feet, came with easy steps towards us. It was the Numberdár. He had been supervising the building of a new mosque and hence could not come earlier. How I wished to have him trained in a School which would teach him that 'to serve mankind is the true wor-

ship'! It so happened that the mail coolie of Pt. Shridher Joo Dhar, the Divisional Forest Officer appeared on the scene just then and he bought everything for us. In the moonlight on the bank of a smoothly flowing rivulet, on a tripod of stones we lit a fire and cooked and ate our food. The night was clear and a number of constellations could be seen distinctly. Cassiopeia was right in front of us. We slept in the Numberdár's drawing room. The uneven planks forced their way uncomfortably into our ribs.

Early in the morning of August 7th we left for Toabat. The valley closes in, hardly leaving space for cultivation. We could see several patches of buckwheat and peas here and there. The path goes along the slope high above the river. Here the Krishna Ganga turns towards the north. A number of small rills rising from the slopes cross the path. The Balsum, Scabiosa speciosa, Myosotis, Lindelofia, Blue bells, Lavatera, Aster and Dipsacus inermis (Wopal hák) decorate the path on either side. The latter plant is cooked with pulses (mong) and is considered nutritious. In some places the pines are so thick that the rays of the sun can scarcely find their way through them. The quivering of the leaves of the white poplar under the sun produces the effect of a million twinkling stars. Turtle doves and whistling thrushes were not uncommon. The path crosses an uneven bridge made of logs tied together, suspended over the dashing torrent. It requires pluck to cross. Below the bridge is Toabat village, *toa—pan, bat—a stone*. The people here in the olden times used stone pans for cooking hence the origin of the name. The Gagai stream joins the main river at this spot. It is said that the water of the Gagai is the best for drinking in the Gurais district. Here is also a water mill. We found three tents pitched on the right bank of the Gagai amidst the pines, firs, wild walnuts and poplars. It was the camp of Pt. Shridher Joo Dhar, the Divisional Forest Officer. We entered the tent

and found the simple, unostentatious forest officer inside studying the map of the district. He had heard of our mission and was very anxious to see us. Hot milk and food was served and it was decided to move half the camp to Dudgai hill for an excursion. About two o'clock the Forest Officer and we left for Dudgai. We walked for some time along the right bank of the Gagai and crossed the bridge where the Dudgai meets the Gagai. Here the water is so transparent that a pin thrown into it could be seen clearly. The Dudgai hill 12,000 ft. is a watershed between the Gagai and the Dudgai.

We came to the foot of the hill but missed the right path and began to climb the one pointed out by the Forest Officer. We ascended for some time amidst the firs and caught hold of the long ferns to help us up. Along this slope there flew a pair of monal pheasants. One of our camp followers had taken the right path and now called us to it. A male Hodgson's rosefinch flew out of the grass. We came to a small flat place close to a rill, about 600 feet from the top and pitched the tents there, facing the northern aspect of the Gagai nállah, which is covered with birch and fir and is an attractive bit of forest. We were above the tree belt, in grassy land. The Forest Officer supplied all our wants and we were entirely comfortable. The luminary of the night rose to light up the dark abyss covered with trees. She rose behind the jet black naked peak of Anezber (goose crack) decked with two snow-beds. Silence reigned supreme. The only noise was either the dove-like *ghur ghur* of my companion's hookah or that of the distant flow of the Krishna Ganga.

On the morning of August 8th after having breakfast we climbed the peak and walked along the side through a meadow. The flower beds of various colours were glorious. The Macrotomia Benthami was in flower. This plant is a favourite drug used in making medical concoctions and is given to patients

by doctors in the East. We sat down for some time on a lower peak where we picked some Rhododendrons. The view was grand. The northern aspect of the Gagai was streaked with silvery rills amidst the green herbage. In the distance we could see two snowy peaks and were told that one was Nanga Parbat. The flies were very troublesome. We descended to our tent. We had our meal and started for Toabat at 3 p.m. We took the other path over the mountain, ascended several hundred feet to the top and began to walk over it. The path was very narrow in several places and on the right was a perpendicular precipice. We collected several kinds of Saxifragas and Androsace aizoon for pressing. It was a rare event for us to see here (11,000 ft.) a pair of hoopoes flying among the trees. We descended from the grassy belt to birch trees and from birch trees to firs. We arrived late at Toabat. Here we saw the Patwari (Revenue Clerk) of the village. He told us that the peasants had come to him trembling and with supplicating hands had entreated him to do something to turn the detectives (as they thought us to be) out of their village. The morning of the 9th August found us bathing in the Gagai Stream where we saw a number of birds like the female plumbeous redstarts. They were young plumbeous redstarts and are like their mothers, but when they grow bigger their tail assumes the red colour and their overcoverts become darker.

We had our meal and left here our kind friend the Forest Officer Pt. Shridher Joo Dhar, the simple and straight-forward gentleman who is out to help the poor, and lives an honest and upright life amidst the upright fir trees. We came to Bagtor where we had our remaining kit. With difficulty we persuaded the coolie to carry it. We came to Kuragbal. Rugh Nath went ahead of us by the general road and we tried to strike a new path alongside the river. For some distance the path was fairly easy, then it began to show its jagged rocks and ups and downs.

till we were tired and it began to get dark. Still continuing our walk we feared lest the night should hurl us into the river, and so we ascended to the general road. The wise have rightly said, 'Never leave a highway for a by-way'. When we came to Gurai we saw Rugh Nath busy pitching tents.

On the morning of August 10th we walked up the Gorai Nallah to find out Lilium polyphyllum and if possible to mark it for seed. The seed of Salvia hians was unripe. We could not walk faster, but had to stop every now and then like the horse of a Molvi (Mohammedan Priest) to appease our appetites with wild strawberries. When a Molvi goes out on horseback he has to stop on the way to enquire after the health of his followers and some times to utter benedictions, thus the horse becomes accustomed to alternate halts and marches. We came back at 11 o'clock after marking some of the flowers for seed. In the afternoon it rained, so we made some envelopes for seeds. We observed the following birds—Indian bushchat, Stoliczka's mountain finch, blue-headed rock-thrush.

The morning of the 11th August found us walking towards the Gosai valley to collect the seeds of Primula rosea. It was drizzling and the white clouds were sailing in the blue vault of heaven. The shadow of the clouds in the valley deepened its greenness. We sat at the foot of the valley to do homage to our hunger. We dug a small hole in the shingle and water flowed out. Alas! we have not the power to strike the rock with our staves and bring out water. Sin envelops us.

The valley was a real flower garden. The slopes were bedecked with tall yellow golden rods. The yellow Potentilla beds were fringed with red Pedicularis and bright-hued butterflies came to suck nectar from the flowers; while in the distance peeped the blue poppy like the eye of Cupid from among the rocks. The stream flowed silently so as not to disturb the tranquillity of Nature; but a rude long-legged buzzard flew '*Kyuning*' from

one peak to another. We were just in time to find the seeds of P. rosea ripe in capsules and collected all we could. This plant thrives well in swampy places. The seeds of almost all the flowers were unripe. After taking a good walk round the valley we came to the base camp at Gorai.

In the afternoon we climbed into a ravine to look for Belladonna atropia. (möt bránd). The next day was August 13th. We removed our camp to the base of the Gosai valley. Pt. Dina Nath had to employ coolies to sow the Koṭh seeds. All of us carried part of our camp equipment and three ponies were also employed. Three tents were pitched, one for the Forester, the other belonging to Lala Amin Chand was assigned to the coolies for their lodging and we pitched our tent between these two.

We all, Rahima the guard, the head coolie and the forester kept up a lively talk until 10 p.m. in the latter's tent. We left to go to sleep in our respective tents. It began to rain hard during the night. In the morning we found our rucksack missing. It included a pair of field glasses presented to the school by Dr. Casey A. Wood. We knew the thief but we had no proof against him.

On the morning of August 18th we left the beautiful Gosai valley and ascended the pass, covered with clouds on all sides. Almost every day it rains in this valley. The Monkshood was in blossom. The Jurinea macrocephala grew in abundance.

We arrived at Trágabal at 11 a.m. We did not find Rev. J. S. Dugdale there; he had left the place at 10.30 a.m. so Mr. Kay very kindly lent us some money, part of which was sent to our friend, the forest officer, part we kept for our journey. We halted for some time on the pass. The descent took us one hour and a half. We spent the night with our old boys at Chatternar and Pt. Suraj Ram Muttoo gave us a musical entertainment. Early in the morning of August 19 we left for Srinagar. The cattle were grazing standing knee-deep in shal-

lower parts of the Wular lake and water birds were flying gaily to and fro, at times swooping after their quarry. A huge fish eagle was perched on a rock. We stopped some time at Sumbal where a military force had halted. About 5 o'clock our tonga drove through fields full of maize in cobs, sesame in pods and rice in drooping ears. Through the rustling poplar avenues, the home of our feathered friends, we entered the city. Finally we wish to thank heartily all our supporters who make these trips possible for us, and thus enable us to learn and pass on our knowledge to younger souls, to inspire their hearts and open them to the great Founts of Love.

16. THE WULAR LAKE

The Wular lake is the largest fresh water lake in India. It is about 13 miles long and 6 miles broad, covering an area of about 78½ sq. miles. It is encircled by the high mountains on the north and north-east of the valley. The rivers Bohnár, Madamati and Erin from the mountain ranges and the Vetasta (Jhelum) and the Ningal from the south bring hundreds of tons of silt into the lake year after year.

The word Wular comes from a Sanskrit word 'Ullola' which means stormy, high rising waves. The origin may also be attributed to a Kashmiri word 'Wul' which means a gap or a fissure.

There are a number of traditions connected with the lake. About 26 centuries before the Christian Era, Raja Sandimán of Kashmir founded a city on both the sides of the Vetastá at the foot of the northern mountain ranges in Khoyi Hámá. He built here spacious and grand buildings, tall and graceful temples furnished with golden and silver images. This city was called Sandimat Nagar. The same king built the temple at Shankará-chária Hill.

About 544 years later in the reign of Sunder Sen, this place became a den of immorality. The people forgot God. Day and night they wallowed in wine and debauchery, worshipping mammon and woman. The king sided with profligate persons. When such conditions reached a climax, a potter of this city named Nand Gupth of low caste, a man whom the people hated because of his piety, was inspired and preached against the sinful ways of the people. They mocked and laughed at him. Where wealth accumulates, men decay. According to the local tradi-

tion, the potter was inspired in a dream that he should tell all the citizens to leave the town, and he with his family should climb the hill, but not look back till he reached the top. Next day he did this. With his potter's wheel on his back he climbed the hill. When he reached the middle of the way he cast a look at the city but found no change. When he reached the top, the earth shook, a fissure appeared in the earth, water gushed forth and swamped the whole city. Near Baramulla at Khádaniyár a part of the mountain tumbled down and blocked the flow of the river Jhelum. This caused a flood to deluge the valley. He found half of his potter's wheel turned into gold. The hillock, on the top of which is the shrine of Baba Shukur Din, is still called Krala Sangör (potter's hillock). It is said that the ruins of the ancient city are to be seen when the water is very low. This is not unlike the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

One of the ancient names of the lake was Mahá Padma Saras. Mahá Padma, a serpent-god, a satellite of Shiva is believed to be the patron saint of the lake. It is said that in the reign of Jayapid (753-784 A.D.) a Dravidian sorcerer intended to exorcise Mahá Padma from here in order to water some arid region in the plains. Jayapid in a dream beheld an apparition of Maha Padma who besought him to save him from this sorcerer and promised to show him a mountain of raw gold. In the morning the king made enquiries and found out this sorcerer. 'How can you dry this lake which has an average depth of 15 feet', the king asked. 'Your Majesty, I shall show on the spot', said the sorcerer. They both went to the shore of the lake and the sorcerer, by darting arrows in different directions dried the lake. The king saw Mahá Padma and his family in a form half human and half snake, struggling for life in the mire. The king ordered the sorcerer to fill the lake again and dissuaded him from taking away the serpent. The snake appeared again in a dream to the king and said 'Your Majesty has exposed my

family; I shall not show you raw gold but a raw-copper mine from which can be made one million coins'. There is another version of the story. The sorcerer engaged a boat and told the boatman to take the boat near the spring. He kept a candle burning in the boat, on the burning of which his safety rested. The sorcerer dived into the lake and brought up the big snake Mahá Padma, and drew a circle of lime round the spot where he placed the snake. He dived again in order to bring up his family. The snake in the boat entreated the boatman to extinguish the candle and rub out this circle of lime, and promised him gold in exchange for this good turn. The boatman was moved by this speech and did as requested. The serpent, being free, jumped into the lake and killed the sorcerer who was about to move his family. The boatman did not see any gold, but saw charcoal floating on water. He was disgusted, and collected some charcoal in his Kangri. Next day he saw all the charcoal turned into gold. He expressed sorrow, born of avarice for not collecting more.

This lake is a charming recreation ground. During the past 60 years it has been the Chief Easter Camp of the masters and boys of the Biscoe schools. Their flotilla has consisted of House-boats, doongas, Shikaras, a 12 oar'd cutter, and sailing boats. They have churned the waters of every bay and gulf, climbed every peak and meadow, visited every spring and interesting spot, taken with them lunch and tea, rowed and sailed day and night whenever occasion arose. When returning from an expedition in a pitch dark night in their sailing boat, the inmates of the camp would reveal their position by hoisting a light on a long punting pole or keep a fire burning on the beach of the lake. In one such expedition the lake became dangerously rough, a row-lock got loose and fell into water, and flowed down to Sopor. Rumours were afloat, and some were even telegraphed to Srinagar that some Biscoe school masters were

drowned. Their relatives and officials hastened to the spot to see the dead, but to their intense surprise, they met a smiling group alive and well. Many such unique outings have taken place. I recollect an occasion when my friend and I were in the sailing tub, the Artemis at 3 a.m. The moon and the star constellations shedding full light, the breeze driving us towards the island, every conceivable animal life in perfect repose, the mountains shrouded in a dark mantle, the reflection of celestial orbs in the lake most soothing, we sailed as in a dream world till the light of the dawn from the east beckoned us to move towards the coast. Such moments of unearthly calm only angels can share.

Thus the people living on the shores of the lake have been encouraged to shake off all superstitions and fears and warmly welcome the lake as their friend. At times the lake is very dangerous, especially when the wind blows down from Nága-marg and with a sudden gust of wind from above swamps and sinks a boat. This wind is called Nága Kon,* a violent and sudden squall. The wind blowing down the Erin and the Madumati Valleys and that from Baramulla called Vij, and gusts from the direction of Srinagar ruffle the calm surface of the lake turning it into a rough rude sea. This generally takes place in the afternoon, hence boats usually cross the lake before noon. It would be a good move if the Government built a police post near Ajas promontory—which we christened Green Nose—fully equipped with binoculars and life saving devices so as to be always ready to rescue any boat in danger. Many lives have been lost in the past in rough weather without any help to save them.

To spend one's holiday leisurely on the shores of the lake, one should hire either a house-boat or a doonga and also arrange

* Kon is blind in one eye.

for a sailing boat to cruise in the lake, if possible. It is a distance of about 46 miles from Srinagar to Banayari, the entrance to the Wular. There are many camping places *en route,* but the boat should not be exposed to wind. The journey may be broken either at Shadipor or Sumbal.* Shadipor is about 14 miles by river from Srinagar and about 9 miles from Ganderbal. Sumbal is about 6 miles from Shadipor. Next day in the afternoon the boat will be at Banayari the mouth of the Jhelum where it enters the lake. In April the area round the banks of the river and deltic region of the lake is beautifully covered with yellow rapeseed blossom and skylarks are seen soaring and singing in the heavens. Cries of fish-eagles can sometimes be heard.

There are three excellent mooring places; (*a*) Ningal, (*b*) Kiunus Bay, (*c*) Ajus spur. As the lake is silted up by the rivers and rain erosion, canals have been dug to get boats to the shore. Some times difficulty is experienced in finding these canals, but boatmen are expert pilots, and can be relied upon to find a way.

(a) Ningal Nallah

Ningal is three miles from Sopor, which is the chief town on the Wular towards the southeast. Many a cruise in a sailing boat or in a shikara can be arranged. Here also is Mahseer found. The willow trees harbour starlings, thrushes golden orioles, and common birds, e.g., mynas and sparrows, snipes and flocks of black-headed gulls may be seen skimming over the water. Once a mulberry tree was so full of scarlet minivets on their vernal migration, that it could have been taken for the flame of the forest.

* Two miles from Sambal is Vösi Khan where a canal 11 miles long is drawn from the river to Sopor to avoid crossing the Wular Lake.

(b) Kiunus Bay

The Kiunus valley lies under the shadow of Baba Shukur-ud-Din's Ziarat which is on the top of Krála Sangör Hill. It is 13 miles from Sopor and about 8 miles from Bandipur. The Zainagar canal which is draws from the Madmati at Khayar opposite Sonarwon is about 25 miles long and waters this village. The lower slope of the mountain is covered with thorny bushes where White-throats, White-capped Buntings, Bushchats and Bee eaters make their nests. Higher above among pebbles and shingly surface, Chukors and Blue Rock-thrushes build their nests.

Baba Shukur-ud-Din is the guardian Saint of the lake. His shrine is on the summit of the hill. There is a ziarat and accommodation for priests. They store water in large earthen vessels covered with birch bark to keep it cool. In early March the whole place is beautifully covered with Crown imperials. It commands a glorious view of the Lake.

Lolab Valley

There is a bridle path from Kiunus to Lálpor (Lolab). On the way there are two lovely villages* nestling among pines, before one reaches the top of the Rámpur hill, which is 5¼ miles distant. It is about 8 miles from this place to Lálpor (Lolab). Divor is a good camping ground with two springs *en route*. There is another path from Olus which is three miles away. From Olus to the Sharifoan at the top of the hill is about 8 miles. Thence 2 miles to Lálpore (Lolab). Lolab is a magnificent forest area covered with deodar trees. They stretch low down into the plain. Villages are shaded with apple, pear and walnut trees. Monkeys are found in large numbers on the forest trees. The Tree Creepers, the Crested-Black Tit, Yellow

* Rampor and Rajpor.

billed Magpie, Pied Woodpecker, Sooty Flycatcher and slaty-headed Parakeets also house themselves on these trees.

The Bungas Valley

In the northern mountain region of the Kashmir valley, to the west of Lolab Valley, there is a lovely extensive meadow called Bungas, a rich pasturage, about 9,500 ft. above sea-level.

It is about 22 miles from Langet and 71 miles from Srinagar. From Langet a jeep track for 14 miles runs to Putwari and from there a pony-track of 8 miles goes through fir and deodar forests to Bungus. There is a short track from Handawara to Wadar about 12 miles and a pony track of about 4 miles from Wadar village. At present Langet is the nearest Bus stop.

If well developed, it will be next Gulmarg. It is a famous nai (meadow) where shepherds take villagers' sheep, goats and cattle for summer months to rear. The gujars go there with their buffaloes. This beautiful spot is worthy of developing. Tourists huts, rest houses can be gracefully erected. At such places, where the artificial civilisation has not yet invaded, the tourist should carry with him all equipment and boarding arrangements. One may pitch a tent in the open under a coniferous tree and enjoy Nature.

There is a stream, the Tilwan Kol draining these heavenly meadows. There are a number of springs. There is a charming tarn Satkol Sar about which people have a great superstition. A party of officials had been there to find out the possibility of irrigating the Rajwar area from the waters of this place. A relative of mine told me that a man felt pain in his stomach, it was referred to the doctor and in a mysterious way the man disappeared. It happened near Satkol Sar which according to their belief is haunted by Fairies.

The vegetation is luxuriant. The wild flowers are in profusion. The herbs are in abundance. Sassurea sacra, Sassurea

lappa, Atopia bullodone and many other useful plants are to be found.

From Bungas there is a sacred lake dedicated to Shankar (Shiva) on the top of a mountain called Köj Nág 13,000 ft. about 17 miles. There are also stag, bear and other game animals.

Nagamarg

There is a lovely meadow about 10,000 ft. above sea-level.

Spring in the Wular Lake

Not very far from Waṭalab point, water bubbles up from the bottom of the lake. There is another spring somewhere near the middle, where water bubbles up likewise. The Hindus offer sugar candy and rice and Mohammedans also make some kind of offering before entering the lake. Friday is supposed to be unlucky for crossing the lake.

Zirmanz is the deepest part of the lake. The current flows towards it. All corpses accumulate here, hence it is called Möta Khon (the gulf of corpses). There is a rest house on the bank commanding a charming view.

The Sodurkot spur

This spur which we have named Green Nose, lies between Sodurkot and Gurur village on the Srinagar-Bandipor motor road. The advantage of this mooring post over others is that there is a flat piece of ground near the shore and a level spot on the spur which commands one of the finest views of the lake. There are also remains of an ancient fort on it. The place is about 6 miles from Bandipor with its post and telegraph office, police station and dispensary.

Sulphur Spring

About 4 miles from Green Nose is a sulphur spring. It is believed to cure some skin diseases. On either side of the

general road there are wild pomegranate trees which yield anárdön used for making sauce and sour vegetable preparations.

Temple at Gurur

There is a spring dedicated to goddess Gauri at Gurur about two miles from here. There is an ancient temple at one corner of this spring. It is said that there were four temples standing at four corners of this spring. But the stones of these temples have been removed in order to build the temple on the island in the lake. The Pandits living in the vicinity believe it to be good for their health if they bathe here before sunrise on Sundays. It is a pleasant picnic spot.

Spring at Nodhal

About four miles from Green Nose is a spring just near the road. There are some images carved out of some rocks evidently showing some signs of an ancient sacred spot. There is a beautiful mountain spur to climb to the pines.

Erin Valley

The charming valley starts from Nödhal and leads up to two lovely high altitude lakes. The journey would require at least four days.

Madumati Valley

Following the course of the Madumati river for some miles, there are some beautiful small waterfalls, about 11 miles from the camp.

Island

It is said that this island in the Wular Lake was made by the good king Zain-ul-abidin (1423-1474). He built it to serve as a beacon of safety for boatmen in stormy weather. It was then

in the middle of the Lake, but it is now towards one side and when water is low one can wade to it. During these years the lake has been silted up by the river. There is a temple towards the north-eastern corner of the island and a part of the temple is sunk down. There is a lingam of the temple in the water. It is said that the stones from the Gurur temples have been utilised in building the edifice on this island. It is a delightful picnic spot.

Cave of Dhanishawar

About ten miles up the Erin Valley is the cave of Dhanishawar. There is a very narrow passage leading into the cave. It is necessary to carry a light. From the roof of the cave, water drips on the lingam. There is a chamber inside which would hardly contain about seven persons. It is sacred to the Hindus and is visited when the moon is full.

Villages round the Lake

At Ajus there is a stone quarry where stones, are dressed. Tomb-stones, stone mortars, and other things of stone are made. The woods round about contain witch-hazel, so at Ajus, Gurur and Sudorkot baskets of wicker-work are made and exported to other towns. During winter wild animals such as the bear, monals, and antelopes come lower down. Bee-keeping is also practised.

Towards the northern shore fish are dried. They have two methods: one is to dry the fish along with the viscera and the fish so treated being called *raza hogada* (rope dry fish) and the other is to take out the viscera and dry the fish, this is called *Khanda hogada* (sugar dry fish). They are exported to the city.

Singārā (water chestnut) is the great product of this place. It is a state monopoly. The government lets it out on contract. There was a time when it was the staple food of the villagers

and the shimmering waters of the Dal Lake which is hardly half a mile away. It must have been an ideal site for fishing, fowling and hunting, which is exactly what our ancestors did in about 2500 B.C. when they roamed in the valley, and encamped as they liked.

The excavations at Burzahom have revealed Dwelling Pits, cut into the Natural Soil which is mostly loessic material. These Dwelling Pits are well like structures and are generally narrow at the top and wide at the base, the diameter varying according to needs. Post holes on the periphery suggest a birch cover supported on wooden posts as protection against the inclemencies of weather. Deposits of ash within the pits are clearly indicative of human occupation. Inside the Pits are storage and pot pits which generally contain some bones. Besides these circular Pits there are rectangular structures with attendant post holes suggesting superstructures with a sloping roof carried on a ridge as in the villages of Kashmir. There are storage and pot pits within the Chambers, and ovens generally in the centre. Bone and stone tools are suggestive of a hunting economy. There is no evidence which could speak of an organised religion to go by. The tools in bone and stone are axes, adzes, chisels, points, harpoons, needles, arrow heads and spear points, scrapers etc.

In the next stage are Mud Platforms for occupational purposes and regular timber structures with clear floor levels. The incidence of tools in bone and stone is greater. There are new types such as harvesters, scrapers, pick axes, suggestive of early farming, some composite tools, and a few tools in copper such as barbed arrow heads and chisels. Pottery is generally hand made. The deluxe ware of the period is black burnished ware. There are a few painted pots which may have been imported. Burial customs are complicated and even animals are buried. The burials are within the habitation and within the compounds. There are primary and secondary burials. In most of the cases,

red ochre is applied to the bones. Sometimes animals and human beings are buried in the same pit. The animals buried are barasingha, wild and domestic dogs, ibex etc.

Before referring to the important landmarks in the development of architecture in Kashmir, it would be useful to draw out an outline of some of the important historical events which have a bearing on our subject. The early historical tradition as compiled by Kalhana in his Rajtarangini mentions, among others, kings Ashoka (Maurya Dynasty), Kanishka and Huvishka (Kushan), Tormana and Mihirkula (White Huns), but the chronology of Kalhana is rather confusing. The name of Ashoka (3rd century B.C.) is connected with Pandrethan (Ancient Puranadhisthana, meaning old capital). Ushkura (ancient Huvishkapura) and Kanispor (ancient Kanishkapura) in Baramulla are associated with Kanishka and Huvishka of the Kushana Period who ruled Kashmir in early Chrisian Era. Kanishka is said to have convened his great council of Buddhist divines at Harwan. The close associations with India are thus clearly indicated. On the whole not much is known of the early history of Kashmir before the reign of Pravarasena II (close of the 6th century A.D.)

The most outstanding names in the history of Kashmir during the Hindu Period are those of Muktapida-Lalitaditya (middle of 8th century A.D.) and Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883). Avantivarman's reign is known for the achievement of peace and prosperity which were all the more appreciated after the troublous time which ensued on the death of Lalitaditya who was a great conqueror.

Avantivarman's successors proved weak and inefficient and Kashmir had a very troublous time till the administration was in the hands of Queen Didda (A.D. 980-1003), who despite her sex was a strong ruler and subjugated the feudal chiefs. Again Kashmir went through more than three centuries of unsteady

and uncertain time after her when Shah Mir alias Shams-ud-din usurped the throne in 1338 A.D. and ruled till A.D. 1341. He established the Sultanate of Kashmir.

After about 50 years came Sikandar 'Bhutshikan' who aided and hardened by his minister Suhabhatta (convert to Islam), proved a heartless iconoclast and put thousands of men to the sword as the result of which there was a mass migration from Kashmir to India. Then followed the greatest Muslim ruler of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abidin (A.D. 1421-1472) who is still gracefully remembered by the name of Badshah (the great king). It was given to him to heal the deep wounds inflicted on the unhappy Hindus of the Valley by his father Sikandar. He proclaimed peace and goodwill towards all without the distinction of caste or creed.

The death of Zain-ul-Abidin threw Kashmir into anarchy and the throne was in succession shared by the Sayyids, Magres and Tsaks till it was conquered by Akbar in A.D. 1586 ushering in the modern age of Kashmir. Kashmir thus became a part and parcel of the Indian Empire. In A.D. 1739 Kashmir was annexed to the kingdom of Kabul by Nadir Shah and remained under the Afghans till Ranjit Singh wrested it from Amir Dost Mohammed in 1819. When the Sikhs were defeated, Kashmir was transferred to Maharaja Gulab Singh by the British Government in A.D. 1846 under the Treaty of Amritsar. Gulab Singh established the Dogra Rule in Kashmir which lasted till A.D. 1947.

The important landmarks in the Development of architecture in Kashmir can be properly assessed against the historical events specified above. Great artistic heights were achieved, because of a receptive and a reactive mind to the ever changing pattern of Nature's enchanting bounties, which attract thousands to this part of India. Of all the arts Kashmiris were proficient in build-

ing activities, the remnants of which stand a testimony to the heights which have singled them out in this field also. The earliest traces are at Harwan twelve miles north-east of Srinagar. Situated half a mile up from the front hatchery, Harwan was a thriving and a prosperous Buddhist settlement in the early centuries of the Christian Era. The complex at Harwan consists of a monastery meant for the monks, a prayer hall, and a stupa where Buddha's relics must have been enshrined. These have been dated to 4th-5th century A.D. The interesting aspect is the masonry which is the earliest in Kashmir. It is either in diaper rubble or diaper pebble or pebble. However, of great importance are the terracotta (baked clay) tiles which are mainly on the highest terrace girdling a Chaitya (Buddhist temple) of the 3rd-4th century A.D. It is an aspidal (horse-shoe type) chaitya in diaper pebble style with a tiled courtyard going all round. The tiles are unique of their kind in Indian art. 'Their value lies in the fact that they represent motives suggestive of more than half a dozen alien civilizations of the ancient world, besides others which are indigenous and local'. These tiles in baked clay are 18″ × 12″ long and moulded with a design. The size though impressive is not the only attraction.

The designs, floral, geometrical, human and animal, form an impressive parade of the whole life of the period. The designs depict a colourful world and still pulsate with life. There are dancing girls and musicians beating drums. Lovers chatting on balconies is a favourite theme. The animal world is also amply represented. There are rams and cocks fighting, geese, running ducks and pheasants within a floral pattern. The geometrical designs consist of wavy lines, frets and fish bone patterns. Lotuses, acquatic plants, and some other flowers are amply represented. The architects and artists have combined to create a rich and a colourful world to feast the eye and elate the heart. The dress of men and women, oddly enough, is different from

what should have normally been expected in Kashmir. Some of the figures are dressed in trousers and Turkoman caps.

After the close of this early Buddhist phase, the beginning of a grand classical development of architecture comes into view. The first records emerge in the 6th-7th century A.D. as evidenced in Shankaracharya temple. The Shankaracharya temple is a simple structure built on a high octagonal plinth and commands one of the finest views in Kashmir. The plinth carries a low parapet wall 23′-6″ long on each side. The inner surface of this wall is adorned by eighty four recesses enclosed in rectangular panels. The main shrine consists of a cell, circular inside, with a diameter of 13′-2″. The interior of the sanctum is covered by a modern ceiling. The brick roof also is not the old one. Some repair to the temple were carried out in Moghul times as is clear from a Persian inscription which records the date A.H. 1054 (1644 A.D.). The temple was dedicated to Shiva.

The most important landmark is the temple of the sun at Martand, situated about 42 miles south-east of Srinagar in Dist. Anantnag. The temple of the sun commands a superb view, since it is situated on a lofty karewa. The temple was built by Lalitaditya who ruled Kashmir in 8th century A.D. From Shankaracharya to Martand is a bold leap. 'Few countries can show a more decisive leap forward in the materialization of its architectural ideals than Kashmir in the 8th century. Lalitaditya's masons showed a much more profound knowledge of the building art than that ever acquired by the Indian craftsmen of the Gupta regime'.

The ruins of the splendid temple of Martand are still the most striking of ancient Hindu architecture in the valley. The main temple stands on a double base. It is 63′ in length and 36′ in width at the eastern end and only 27′ in width at the western

end. It contains three distinct chambers. The walls of the temple are 9′ thick. Figures of river-goddess Ganga and Yamna and Vishnu are elaborately carved and richly delineated. The main gate leading to the temple is an imposing structure on the western side, and the main temple is enclosed by a colonnaded peristyle 220′ × 142′ containing 84 fluted columns. The most important architectural features are the trefoil arches and massive lintels. Even in their present state of decay they command admiration both by their imposing dimensions and by the beauty of the architectural design and decoration.

In the next important rule of Avantivarman, two important temples at Avantipur, 18 miles south-east of Srinagar on Srinagar-Anantnag road were raised in the 9th century A.D. Avantivarman ruled Kashmir from A.D. 855 to 883 A.D. and this was the most peaceful reign during the Hindu period. Art, culture and literary activities thrived under his patronage. When Avantivarman founded a new capital at Avantipur, Buddhism had already lost its predominant position, giving place to Hinduism, and the character of art too has changed. Out of the two temples raised, the one nearer to Srinagar (Mile No. 17) is dedicated to Shiva and known as Avantishvara. The temple is situated in a courtyard enclosed by a massive stone wall. The gateway is in the middle of the western wall. The walls are not decorated with figure sculpture. The panels are quite plain.

However the more important of the two is situated near the town. The temple is dedicated to Vishnu and known as Avantiswami temple. The main shrine is built on a double base with four smaller shrines at four corners. The courtyard is paved and is enclosed by a colonnaded peristyle (cells with arches and column 174′ × 148′-8″. The columns on the western side of the peristyle are fluted. The entrance is in the western wall of the enclosure. The wall surface of the entrance is both exter-

and enriched with carved wooden insertions. Some of the doors and windows have been richly carved, and the wood work of the plinth is an exquisite piece of workmanship.

However, the most important monument of the Muslim period is the Jama Masjid located in the lower part of the city of Srinagar. Its foundation is said to have been laid in 1398 A.D. by Sikandar Butshikan who ruled Kashmir from A.D. 1390 to 1414. It was completed in A.D. 1402. It caught fire thrice during its chequered history. The first fire was in A.D. 1479 and its reconstruction was begun by Sultan Fateh Shah. During Jahangir's rule of Kashmir, it again caught fire in A.D. 1620. Its reconstruction was started immediately after and completed in 17 years. The mosque was again destroyed by fire in A.D. 1674 during the period of Aurangzeb and the reconstruction was completed in three years. The Moghuls built it absolutely according to the old plan. Subsequently repairs ware executed during the Dogra period.

In design it contains all the essential elements of the wooden style of architecture developed in Kashmir. The courtyard in some 240 ft. in diameter while the exterior brick wall, some 30 ft. high, forms a square about 285 ft. to a side. The principal features are the four minars, one in the middle of each side. They are covered by a series of pyramidal roofs crowned by a high pinnacle. The main entrance is on the south. The real greatness of the conception, however, lies in the treatment of the pillared chamber. They are composed of ranges of pillars made out of a single Deoda trunk varying from nearly 25′ to 50′ in height and there are 370 such pillars in the composition.

With the conquest of Kashmir by Moghuls in the 1586 A.D. the old order changed again. The wooden style of architecture

had no patronage and as such started fading out. The art of building in stones was revived according to the architectural ideals of the time. The art of building in stones had been forgotten to such an extent in Kashmir that emperor Akbar had to import 200 master builders from outside. The style that the Moghuls introduced does not need detailed description, since the style is distinctive in character and as prevalent in other parts of the Empire such as Agra and Delhi at that stage. The most important buildings in this style are the rampart wall of the Hari Parbat Fort, the Pather Masjid and the mosque of Akhun Malla Shah. The Hari Parbat Fort was built by the Afghans. But the rampart wall which is three miles in circumference and the two gates Kathi and Sangin Darwaza were raised during Akbar's reign. Kathi Darwaza was the main entrance as the inscriptions have been put here only. It is a simple structure but dignified. Sangin Darwaza is more expansive and ornate and there are elegant windows on either side. It is probable that Akbar had some sort of a fortress erected on the hill, but there is practically nothing of the original work left. Pather Masjid situated in the heart of Srinagar was built in A.D. 1623 by empress Nur Jahan.

The Moghuls also laid out terraced gardens which have never been excelled in any part of Asia. These gardens at Nishat, Shalamar, Chasmashahi and Achabal are the main source of attraction for thousands of visitors. In paying a tribute to their loveliness Sir John Marshall writes, 'There are no other gardens in all Asia round which history and legend have woven so much romance which nature and man have combined to make so lovely. The gardens of the Taj at Agra, of Shalamar or of Shahdara are beautiful of their kind, but they can never hope to rival their sisters in Kashmir, because they lack entirely the majestic surroundings of mountain, pine forest and snowfield, in which the latter are set; and no flowers or grass or trees can ever attain

the same perfection in the plains of India as they can in the highlands of Kashmir'.

This then is the story of monuments as reflected in stone, wood, brick and lime, quite a rich record of achievements and failures of the people of Kashmir. The story is an eventful one which still speaks to us, though mutely, through the haze of time, of the trials and tribulation our ancestors gone through and the heights achieved in this field.

18. LADAKH

Some Practical Hints

Distance from Srinagar to Leh	434 Kilometers
Height	11,500 ft. above the sea level

Some places of interest en route

	Distance from Srinagar in Kilometers	Height above the sea level
Sonamarg	84	9,000 ft.
Zogila top	110	11,578 ft.
Matayan	127	
Drass	147	11,196 ft.
Kharbu	180	
Kargil	204	9,000 ft.
Mulbekh	244	There is a Buddha Mitriya's statue carved out of a rock which is worth a visit
Namika La	259	12,220 ft.
Bodh Kharbu	274	
Fatu La	295	13,479 ft. Highest point on Srinagar-Leh Road
Lamayuro	310	Village of interest and the oldest monastery.
Khalse	337	Strange caves carved from mountains.
Saspol	372	
Leh	434	11,500 ft.

Accommodation

Drass	Rest House	3	Double rooms
Kargil	Dak Bungalow	7	,,
Bodh Kharbu	Rest House	2	,,
Khalse	Rest House	1	,,
Leh	Dak Bungalow	10	,,
	Circuit House and Hotels	7	,,

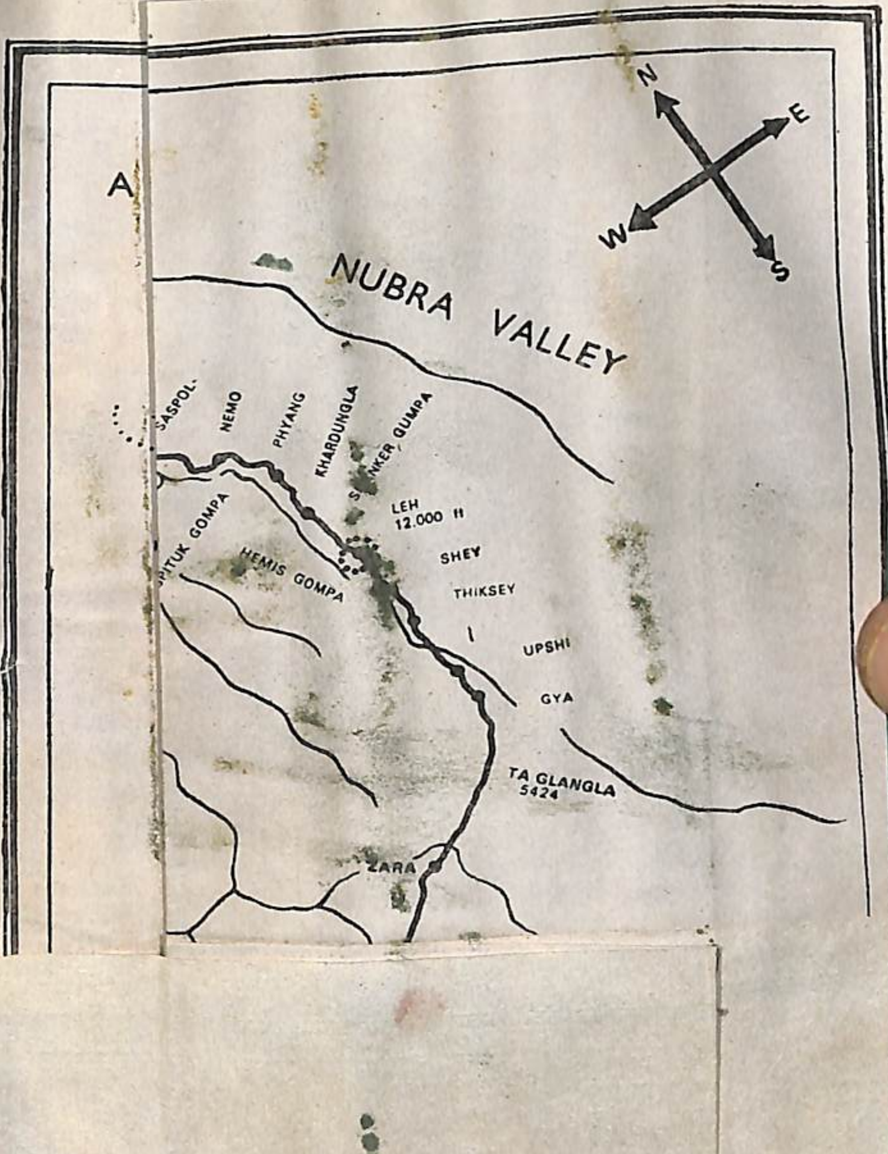
No bedding is available in the Dak Bungalows or in the Rest Houses so it is necessary that a tourist will have his own bedding or a sleeping bag. Warm bedding is essential.

Attractions in Ladakh

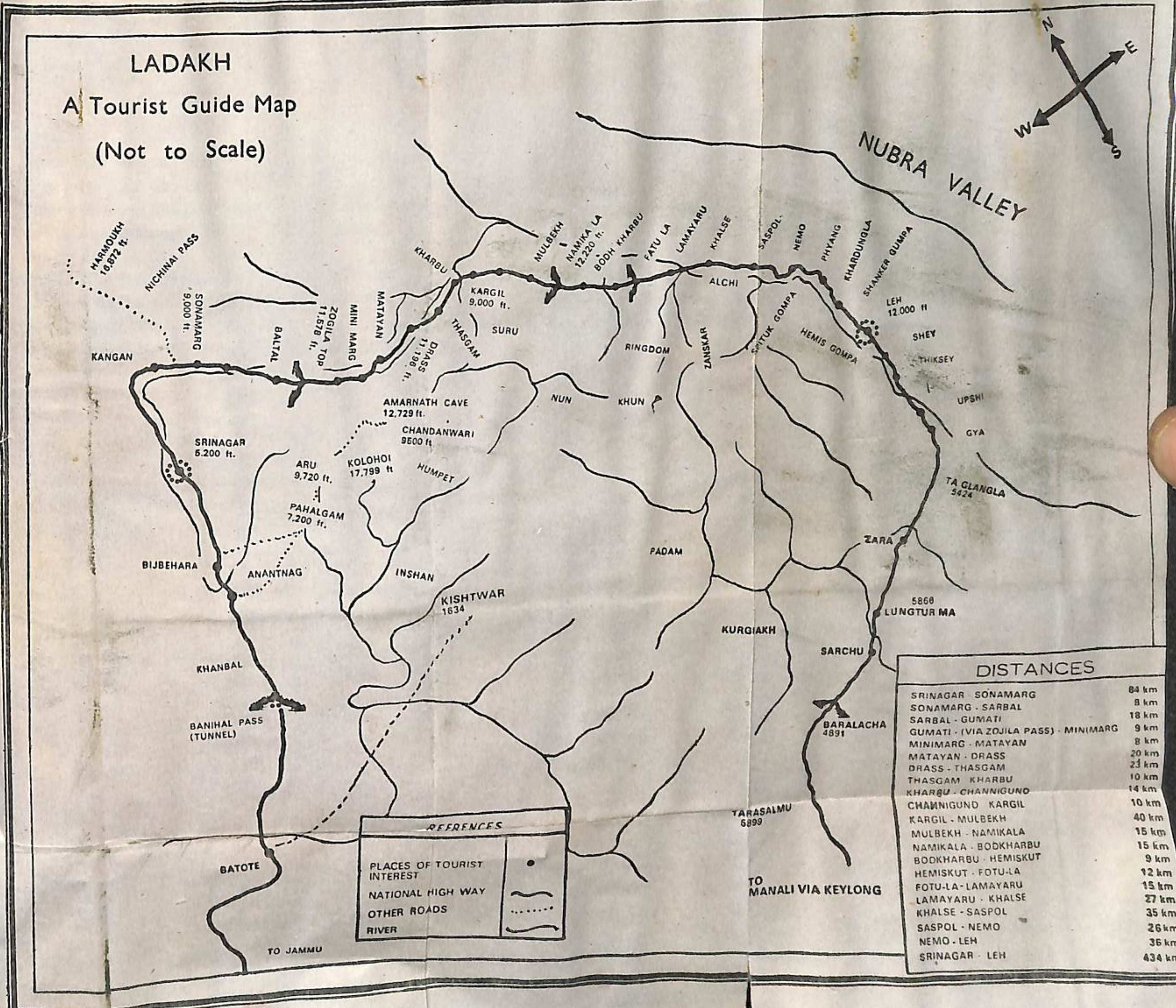
Imambara—Kargil
Mulbekh
Lamayuru
Alchi
Fiang Gompa
The Old Palace—Leh
Leh Gompa
Kali Mata Temple—Leh
Radha Krishen Temple—Leh
Shey Palace
Thiksey Gompa
Hemis Gumpa—Leh
Hemis Dance—Leh in June
Spituk Gompa
Sanker Gompa

Transport

There is a daily bus service from Srinagar to Leh a distance of 434 kilometers. It is a two day journey with a halt at Kargil



A
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NUBRA VALLEY
SASPOL
NEMO
PHYANG
KHARDUNGLA
SANKER GUMPA
SPITUK GOMPA
LEH
12.000 ft
SHEY
HEMIS GOMPA
THIKSEY
UPSHI
GYA
TA GLANGLA
5424
ZARA



DISTANCES

SRINAGAR · SONAMARG	84 km
SONAMARG · SARBAL	8 km
SARBAL · GUMATI	18 km
GUMATI · (VIA ZOJILA PASS) · MINIMARG	9 km
MINIMARG · MATAYAN	8 km
MATAYAN · DRASS	20 km
DRASS · THASGAM	23 km
THASGAM KHARBU	10 km
KHARBU · CHANNIGUND	14 km
CHANNIGUND KARGIL	10 km
KARGIL · MULBEKH	40 km
MULBEKH · NAMIKALA	15 km
NAMIKALA · BODKHARBU	15 km
BODKHARBU · HEMISKUT	9 km
HEMISKUT · FOTU-LA	12 km
FOTU-LA - LAMAYARU	15 km
LAMAYARU · KHALSE	27 km
KHALSE · SASPOL	35 km
SASPOL · NEMO	26 km
NEMO · LEH	36 km
SRINAGAR · LEH	434 km

for the night from where the buses leave early morning the next day so as to reach Leh before the night fall. To move about in Leh, there are some jeep taxis available for the convenience of the tourists for which there are fixed rates.

Trekking

There can be good and interesting short and long treks from Kargil and Leh the two Tehsil Headquarters of the District. There are some unclimbed peaks which an interested trekker may attempt to conquer.

Some Important Instruction for the Tourist

Foreign mountaineering expeditions are required to seek and obtain clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India, New Delhi, at least four months in advance through Indian Mountaineering Foundation c/o Ministry of Defence, New Delhi.

Purchase and sale of antiques is strictly prohibited.
Photography of strategic installations not allowed.
Remove shoes before entering the places of worship.

imitation pearls suspended from the ears forming a special feature. All Dokpas, male and female, decorate their caps with a variety of blood-red flower which marks them out from all other racial types inhabiting the District. Their homeland is rich in fruit, particularly the grape and they delight in dance and drink. The most peculiar thing about them is the taboos which rule their lives. They will not, for example, use cow's milk and its transformations, nor fowl and hen's eggs as food. They will not even use cow-dung as fuel or manure. In fact the cow is so sacred an object to them that they consider the use of anything coming from it as an abomination.

About 16 miles from Kargil on the Kargil-Leh road is the village of Shargol. This is the first village on the road with a Buddhist element in the population which starts increasing steadily from this village until from Lamayuro up to Leh it forms the entire population. The Zañskar area which is accessible from Kargil via the Suru Valley is predominantly Buddhist, only one village out of the twenty-four which make up this area having a Muslim population. The Buddhists of this area are extremely simple and unsophisticated, in fact they form one of the most backward sections of the entire population of the district.

In Leh Tehsil, the town itself and some neighbouring villages e.g., Chhachhot contain a considerable Muslim population, both Shia and Sunni; the rest of the Tehsil is almost entirely Buddhist. Leh itself is a cosmopolitan town where Ladakhis, Tibetans, Yarkandis, Kashmiris, Punjabis and the different racial elements in the Indian garrison stationed here rub shoulders with one another in an atmosphere of perfect peace and harmony. The passionate devotion of the Buddhists to their religion is only equalled by their boundless tolerance. Their integrity and humaneness are proverbial. They are a jolly people who love dance, drink and conviviality and thus offer a complete contrast

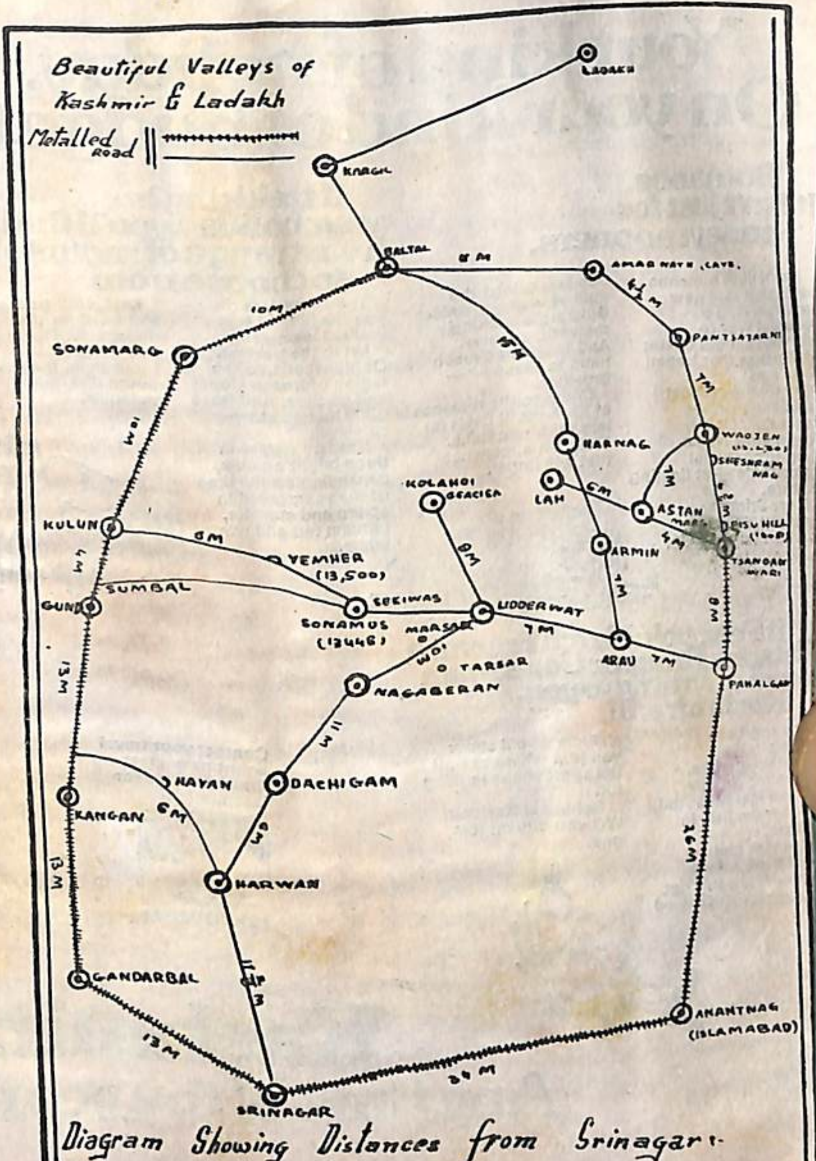


Diagram Showing Distances from Srinagar.

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Contact your travel agent or nearest Tourist Office for information.

J&K TOURISM

Kashmir. Any time of the year.

to the Baltis of Kargil. Polyandry among them has been abolished by law but in practice it is still alive. The Buddhists of Leh have no taboos in matters of food and intercommunal marriages. In the past it was not uncommon for a Buddhist girl to marry a Muslim without severance of relations with her parents and other Buddhist kith and kin. There have been cases in which children born of a Muslim husband and a Buddhist wife have been divided between the parents, some being brought up as Buddhists, others as Muslims. Lamaism with its enforced celibacy of males and females who join a monastic life is a special feature of the social system of the Buddhists.

The Ladakhi, lean, wiry and tall with little or no hair on his chin and lips, the back lower end of his stylish cap reaching to the nape of his neck and upturned at that end, his long woollen robe fastened at the waist with a girdle is a fine specimen of humanity. His incredible power of endurance and his good lung power are his great assets. The head gear of the Buddhist woman, the turquoise-studded perak resembling a cobra with the out-spread hood on the crown of the head and the tail running down the backbone is an object of great attraction and adds to the undoubted charm of their figure. The remaining items in their dress broadly resemble those of the males with the difference that the outer robe in their case is artistically embroidered or, at any rate, has an ornamental border.

An important element of the population of Leh Tehsil is made up by the nomads of Changthang who live in tents of Yak hair and whose only wealth consists of their flocks of sheep and goats with which they move from place to place in search of pasturage. The terrain they occupy is over 13,000 ft. above sea level. The goat which yields the Pashmina wool cannot thrive in lower altitudes. They are a primitive people utterly untouched by the effects of modern civilisation.

Bhotakol pass lies over a glacier studded with treacherous crevasses and is also subject to avalanches which have taken their toll of tourists' lives in former times. When negotiating this glacier, therefore the tourist has to be extremely cautious and circumspect.

The Valleys of Ladakh

Ladakh can be divided into the following broad divisions according to its river systems: (1) The Suru Valley. (2) The Zañskar Valley. (3) The Indus Valley. (4) The Nubra Valley. (5) The Dras Valley. The Suru valley comprises the major part of Kargil Tehsil. The town of Kargil is situated on the left bank of the river which receives the Dras river as a tributory at Kharul about 4 miles down Kargil and then flows into the Indus at Marul. The valley is peopled by Muslims a majority of whom belong to the Shia sect. A strange feature of their social system is the practice of contractual temporary marriage which may last a week or less.

To reach Zañskar from Kargil town one has to pass through the Suru-Kartse area. The route lies in difficult terrain long stretches of which are uninhabited. A notable landmark on the route is the Rangdom Gompa which dominates a broad level plain in solitary grandeur. Next comes the Penzela Pass (nearly 14,000 ft.) the main gateway to Zañskar. The slopes are overgrown with an immense variety of herbs. On the summit are springs of water to which legend attributes the birth of the ancestor of the fine breed of Zañskar pony. The rich-furred marmots have their holes all over the pass, scampering to them at the sight of any passer-by and popping out of them out of curiosity to look about in fright and excitement.

On the left bank of the river Zañskar lies the Karsha Gompa which in common with Likir Gompa in Leh and Kamoling Gompa owes allegiance to Kushok Ngari Tshang whose Head-

quarters are located in Lhasa. On the opposite bank lies Padum the central village of Zañskar with its Gompa. To cross over to the opposite bank one has to negotiate a rope bridge which to many people is an impossible feat. This can be avoided if one visits the area in early September when the river can be crossed on horse back. This timing of a tourist's visit has the further advantage that it eliminates the danger of his having to ford the numerous nallas which fall in the way and which get enormously swollen in the summer months.

Zañskar is a cold bleak inhospitable land growing nothing but barley and peas and inhabited by an extremely simple and unsophisticated people whose wealth lies in their flocks and ponies except in Padam where the Muslims form about 40 per cent of the population, Zañskar is entirely Buddhist. The Nunkhun peak which is in fact two peaks—the Dome Peak (23,476 ft.) and Pinnacle Peak (23,300 ft.) can be seen towering above the other heights dwarfed by its presence opposite Parkhachik about 22 kilometers from Panikhar.

The Indus Valley proper embraces more than 80 per cent of the area of the District. At its north-western end—within cease fire line, of course—is the land of the Buddhist Dokpas who belong to the Dard type and appear to have migrated from the Gilgit area several hundred years ago. Their Aryan features mark them out strikingly from the Mongoloid Baltis and Buddhists.

Further up the river the valley is predominantly peopled by the Mongoloid Bodhs, although Leh the seat of administration for the Tehsil of that name and some neighbouring villages have a considerable Muslim population. Both the Shia and Sunni sects are represented in the population but their comparative liberality imparted to them by the surrounding atmosphere offers a striking contrast to the rigid orthodoxy of their co-religionists in Kargil Tehsil.

At the eastern end of the valley is the vast plateau of Changthang, home of the nomad Champas which can be reached by more than one route, viz., the Changla route intercepted by the Changla Pass (18,000 ft.), the Tanglang La route in which lies the Taglang Pass (17,500 ft.), the Rong route which closely follows the course of the Indus. Beyond the Tanglangla, the second named route bifurcates, one of its branches turning south to the Punjab across the Lachulong Pass (16,600 ft.), the other taking an easterly course leading to the Rupshu area with its sulphur mines and hot-water springs at Puga and the great salt water lake of Tsomoriri to reach which one has to negotiate another pass named Polokonka (16,300 ft.). This lake is about 15 miles long and 3 to 5 miles broad and stands 14,900 ft. above the sea level. Karzok the headquarters of Rupshu is situated close to the lake. The Rupshu area is 14,000 to 15,000 ft. above the sea level and is therefore extremely cold, although, because of the dryness of the atmosphere, the sun on a clear day is scorchingly hot. The atmosphere is rarefied to a high degree and the traveller unaccustomed to such high altitudes may experience some difficulty in respiration. The distance between Leh and Puga is nearly 100 miles and pursuing the route for another 60 miles one reaches Hanley which is about 44 miles from Demjok on the Tibetan border.

The strategically important valley of Chhushol can be reached by the Changla route via the famous salt-water Panghong lake the saphire waters of which are a sight to see. It is a series of lakes with a total length of about 90 miles part of which lies in Tibetan territory and part in Ladakh. The main lake is 40 miles in length. The width varies from 2 to 4 miles. The lake stands at an altitude of nearly 14,000 ft. above the sea.

The Nubra Valley

There are two gateways to the valley from Leh—the Khardongla (17,500 ft.) and the Digarla (above 18,000). The Khard-

ongla route is shorter but more dangerous than the Digarla route, the former being subject to avalanches which often take heavy toll of human lives. The Khardongla cannot generally be safely and conveniently negotiated earlier than the end of June and when the snow has not cleared from the mountain slopes, the Yak is the only transport animal which can be employed over the pass. The ascent from Leh and the descent to the Khardong valley across the pass covers about 27 miles. Once the ordeal of negotiating the pass is over, one finds oneself in a smiling lovely valley, warm enough to favour the growth and fruition of the apple, the apricot and the mulberry trees. The valley is dotted over with patches of thick scrub jungle here and there. The Shyok issuing from the immense water-reservoir of lake Khumdang mingles its waters with the Nubra river forming a mighty confluence which pours its tribute of waters into the Indus at Keris in Shardu now under occupation of Pakistan. There is a suspension bridge at village Tsheti over the river so that one can easily cross over from one bank to the other. There are a number of smiling villages and great monasteries on either bank of the river and in one of these, Panamik, on the left bank of the Nubra river—virtually the last inhabited village, (Lehangling the next village having only one or two huts) on the Yarkand route, there is a hot-water spring.

The Nubra valley adjoins Khaplu now held by Pakistan and was a scene of fierce fighting during the Pakistan invasion of Ladakh in 1948.

The Dras Valley

The Valley is watered by the river Dras issuing from Zojila. Dras, the Headquarters of the area stands in a broad opening of the valley and has a school, a dispensary a combined post and telegraph office together with a rest house to boast of. A short stay in Dras in summer can be à pleasant experience but the

winter with its tremendous snow falls is terrible, the place being reported to be the second coldest inhabited place in Asia. Fire-wood is scarce and has to be brought over from Baltal the foot of the Zojila pass on the Kashmir side.

The area is peopled by Brokpas of the Dard family speaking the dialect Shinna and distinguished by their Aryan features from the Balti population, they are believed to have migrated long ago from Chilas in Gilgit to this part of Ladakh.

Birds and Animals

Among the birds found in Ladakh may be mentioned the griffin vulture, the lamagayar eagle and kestrel, the raven, the red-billed chough and the magpie. The wall-creeper breeds in this very District. The rose-finch, the gold-finch and the bull-finch are met with in Suru and generally in dry areas.

The Tibetan ruby-throat is found in Chhooshul and on the Indus river. The white-spotted blue-throat can be commonly seen in summer. The northern Chakor is met within the Khardung pass and the Tibetan partridge is common in Rupshu. The Himalayan snow-cock and ibis-bill are found in western Ladakh.

Among the wild animals having their habitat in Ladakh may be mentioned the ibex, the Tibetan gazelle, the Tibetan antelope. The black bear and the snow-leopard are found in certain parts of the District. The wolf is ubiquitous in the District. The Skiang or the wild horse can be seen grazing in the vast grassy plains of Changthang.

Art and Culture

Poor though the land is on the whole, it is rich in the artistic endowments of the people. Every Bodh seems to be a born artist and takes to paint and brush as fish to water. The paintings on the walls of the Gompas and those drawn on canvas

and paper by the native artists are marvellous productions. The sculptor's art too has attained here a high degree of excellence. At Mulbek is an 18 foot high image of the Maitreya Buddha—the Buddha to come, called Chamba in Tibetan—carved out of the living rock and displaying a symmetry of form and feature and an expressiveness which cannot but excite the admiration of the on-looker. In Leh town there is in an old Gompa a two-storey high image of Chamba, in the sitting posture, the proportion of the different parts of the body and the symmetry and beauty of the features, particularly the ecstatic expression of the eyes being so perfect as to overwhelm the spectator with breathless wonder. At Shey about 8 miles from Leh is an image cast in metal of the same prodigious proportions and exhibiting the same amazing power of artistic genius. The images studded with gold and silver and set with gems met with in the Gompas which are not only religious seminaries and nurseries of lamas but also great art galleries bear testimony to the sublime heights to which the gifted inhabitants of this arid and barren District have attained in the domain of painting and sculpture. Nor are their achievements in dance and song less impressive. The cultivation and employment of dancing as a solemn medium of high spiritual sentiment is peculiar to Tibet and its neighbours, including Ladakh. At convivial gatherings dancing is an indispensable item and all persons, whatever their age or sex, participate in it with a gusto which is only matched by its chaste decorum.

In another art form—architecture—too, Ladakh's achievements as witnessed in the sites, vast proportions and massive build of its magnificent Gompas are not inconsiderable. The main walls which stand at the entrance and exit of every village and monastery and which in some cases measure hundreds of yards in length several yards in breadth and height and bear on their upper surface thousands of smooth slabs inscribed with the

images of the Buddha or the sacred formula 'Om mane padme Hum' are an enduring monument to the deep devotion of the Buddhist to their religion.

Of the great Gompas, Sankar in Leh town, Spituk (four miles from Leh), Hemis (22 miles from Leh) and Rezong (36 miles from Leh) Sanstainling in Nubra are worth a visit. The famous annual dance of Hemis Gumpa which draws visitors from Europe and America usually takes place in the first week of June. The dances of the other Gumpas fall in winter and are, therefore, not so well known to the outside world.

The depth and breadth of the culture of the people express themselves concretely in the sweet cordiality, the infallible integrity and the refined manners and social etiquette of the people—all of which makes Ladakh a land of gentlemen *par excellence.*

Equipment

The tourist anywhere has to be well-equipped, but in Ladakh with its forbidding geographical conditions, he must be specially prepared to meet all emergencies. He must carry a light tent, light but warm bedding, some quantity of dry victuals, an assortment of necessary medicines, some cotton wool, bandages, a snow-axe if his tour includes glaciers, a piked staff, some length of rope, goggles, a thermos bottle, a torch, candles and match boxes. In case he intends to do the journey on horseback, he would be well advised to carry his own saddle for the saddles supplied by ponymen are generally uncomfortable. Even in midsummer his wardrobe, must contain some warm clothing. He must carry some vaseline to rub his face with and protect it against the oppressive heat of the sun. It would be highly advantageous to him to equip himself with a camera and a binoculars.

If the tour is well timed and well-planned and the tourist is properly equipped he will get all that he could wish out of his travel in this District—of adventure and thrills, come across strange cultural patterns and see Nature in some of her wildest and grandest aspects.

The Baltis are a hardy, industrious people living on the meagre yield of their lands and transport labour. Formerly they used to move down in winter to the hill-stations of India, e.g., Simla, to find labour to supplement their incomes but since the State's accession to India many avenues of lucrative labour have opened for them and their economic condition has consequently improved to an incredible degree and their yearly migrations have now ceased altogether. The amelioration of their condition has also been helped and accelerated by the measures adopted by the Kashmir Government towards this end during the past years.

Dard Muslims

These people who inhabit the cold, bleak Dras Valley came originally from the Gilgit area. Their Aryan features and the language—Shinna—they speak easily mark them out from the surrounding Balti population. They are a proud people mostly of the Sunni persuasion who are prone to regard the Baltis as an inferior race. Some of the males, that is those who can afford, wear turbans, while the females use woollen caps shaped somewhat like inverted troughs as their headgear. Their land is subject to winters of arctic severity characterised by tremendous snowfalls and their cultivating season begins late and ends early. The produce from their land falls far short of their needs and they have to supplement their food stocks by importing maize from across the Zojila pass. It goes without saying that the presence of Indian troops in their midst, as also the measures of the Kashmir Government have contributed substantially to the betterment of the condition of these people also.

Dukpa Bodhs

Confined to a few villages—Dak, Hano, Darcluks, Garkon on the Indus on the north-west border of Leb Tehsil, these simple primitive people also belong to the Dard race and migrated

to Ladakh from their original home in the Gilgit area many centuries ago. They retain their Buddhist faith which they brought with them from their original home and in their social customs and religious practices they are indistinguishable from the rest of the Buddhist population of Ladakh, although their Aryan form and feature mark them out as a distinct racial type. Certain peculiarities in their personal decoration also proclaim and emphasise this distinctiveness. Among these stand out the dried blood-red flowers of unfading colour which they stick to the crown of their caps and the long strings of imitation pearl hanging down from their ears. They inhabit a comparatively warm region of Ladakh abounding in grape, melon, apricot and other fruit and they convert a considerable portion of their grape crop into liquor. In the matter of food and drink they observe a few astounding taboos which also they seem to have brought with them from their home in Dardistan. They keep cows, for example, but consider it a grievous sin to use their milk or milk products. Nor will they use cow-dung as fuel or manure. They also abstain from the flesh of fowl and hen's eggs. When the irrationality of these self-imposed bans is pointed out to them, they argue that if they dared disregard them, divine wrath would be sure to dog their steps and dire punishment in the form of some fell disease would inevitably follow. They are a gay people delighting in dance and drink, but their economic self-strangulation can have only one result. They are a doomed race unless, of course, they break the shackles of their crass ignorance and of the senseless customs which have held them in thrall for centuries past.

Mangolad Bodhs

These people form the bulk of the population of Leh Tehsil which is co-extensive with part of the Indus Valley proper. They are a fine physical type—tall, wiry and energetic. Their women are a charming specimen of feminine grace and withal like

women in other parts of Ladakh they are unsurpassed in their capacity for hard work. The dress of the males does not differ in essentials from that in vogue in other parts of the District except in the form of the cap which varies with every racial type and cultural group. The long woollen coat held at the waist by a cloth girdle and worn over narrow woollen trousers is the common pattern of male dress to be met with in all parts of Ladakh. The female dress also approximates to the same pattern with the difference that the female coat is more colourful and has artistically embroidered borders. But the headgear, as in the case of males, has its own distinctiveness. It consists of a cobra-shaped piece of cloth studded over with turquoises and gold and silver amulets, the hood covering the head and the rest trailing down the back, the tip of the tail reaching just below the cloth girdle. On either side of the hood are black ear-flaps and the back is covered with a goat-skin, an essential item without which it is considered indecent for a woman to appear in society. Perhaps this back skin was originally intended to soften the impact of the baskets which women and children, too all over Ladakh strap to their backs for the deposit of the droppings of quadrupeds collected as fuel for the hearth in absence of firewood, so scarce throughout the District. As elsewhere the women delight in ornaments—rings, necklaces of coral interspersed with semi-precious stones, bracelets and even bells suspended from the girdle and making the movements of the wearers sweetly musical. Shell-bracelets on both wrists are an unavoidable item of decoration for all Bodh females. Unlike the men of the Islamic culture group, the Baltis and Dard Muslims, the Bodh males vie with their females in the display of ornaments but this tendency as a result of modern education is now dying out in the town of Leh and nearby villages where the pigtail which was formerly worn as a religious duty is also disappearing simultaneously. The food of the people is the same as, other parts of the District—flour of parched grim a

kind of barley or wheat bread and tea. Butter, not milk, is an essential ingredient of tea, the decoction with butter put in it being churned in a wooden cylinder to mix well and salt, not sugar, being used in its preparation. The language of the people is Tibetan, popularly called Bodhi and slightly differs from the language used in Kargil in the local variations of vocabulary here and there. The bond of a common language—the Dard Muslims and Dukpa Bodhs also use Tibetan in addition to their own mother tongue—is naturally a great uniting force for the different elements of the population of the District.

The Bodhs are an extremely simple, honest and hardworking people whose tolerance is proverbial. They have no taboos in the matter of food and freely interdine with all people. They have regarded the practice of marrying their daughters into non-Buddhist families as nothing abnormal and have kept the doors of their temples and other religious institutions open for all people irrespective of their creed or nationality. In some cases they have even allowed the affairs of their big monasteries to be managed by Muslims. They are a jolly people who passionately love dance, drink and music and who are endowed with remarkable artistic talent.

The devotion of Bodhs to their religion—a tantric form of Buddhism is profound and intense. Their religious life centres around monastries called *gompas* where the monks—called Lamas—live under monastic discipline away from the turmoil of a worldly life, receive instruction, practise meditation and prepare themselves for ministering to the religious and spiritual needs of the laity and performing the duties of the *gompa*.

The *gompa* which combine in themselves the functions of temples and colleges are huge and massive structures built on hill-sides and elevated grounds impressing the beholder with the vastness of their proportions and grandeur of their architectural design. The walls of the *gompas* are covered with

Another occasion is on marriages when gala feasts are held and when there are many things to eat, drink and dance and make merry.

When a Ladakhi goes out on his travels all he has to carry as equipment is a bag of parched flour, some butter, a kettle shaped to his back and a cap deposited under his outer robe in the space at his girdle. In his cap he has a large stock of needles and in his girdle an assortment of gadgets—everything that could be useful to him during the journey from a knife to the fire-producing flint. He carries no bedding on his travels, his long robe or robes and some other things serving that purpose fully.

The women among the Buddhist enjoy a status of perfect equality with the men. Their freedom is unrestricted. Every family is self sufficient in the matter of its requirements. From the cap to the shoe—their indigenous variety called palsi—everything is produced in the house. Wool is spun on taklis and woven on looms with a width of 8 or 9 inches. A strong thick woollen fabric with raised plush—called phrink patoo—is a special product of Ladakh.

The language spoken is Tibetan with local variations, of course. It has so to say three vocabularies. A person speaking Ganother has to select his vocabulary according as the addressee is an equal, an inferior or a superior person. Literary or classical Tibetan is not the same as the colloquial language and has to be studied. The script is modelled on the Devnagari and the Grammar is modelled on the sutra of Paulni. The social etiquette and manners of the people are highly refined and charming.

Night-soil is carefully preserved as manure for the soil by a system which may be called the 'dry flush' of Ladakh. The quantities of dry earth is shovelled over the night-soil accumulat-

ing in the ground floor. There is absolutely no smell from this mixture of earth and night soil which by the time it has to be taken to the fields in baskets takes the shape of harmless ordinary earth. The droppings of animals wherever found are eagerly picked up and dried to be used as fuel.

The number of houses among the Buddhists has been a fixed quantity for centuries past and every house had a name. But now new and modern and beautiful buildings of considerable size are coming up which usually are two to three storey high. The people who are today better housed, better fed and better clothed testify to the advancement towards progress and prosperity since independence.

THE WOLF

(*Canislupus*)

Kashmiri name ... Rama Hun
Vernacular name ... Bariya

It is a dangerous animal and generally attacks cattle. These are rare in the valley.

THE FOX

(*Vulpes montana*)

Kashmiri name ... Potsolov

Its fur is fine. It feeds on chickens and other small game birds. It is not common. Its cunning nature is proverbial. It is generally found to follow the leopard.

THE JACKAL

(*Canis aurcus*)

Kashmiri name ... Shal

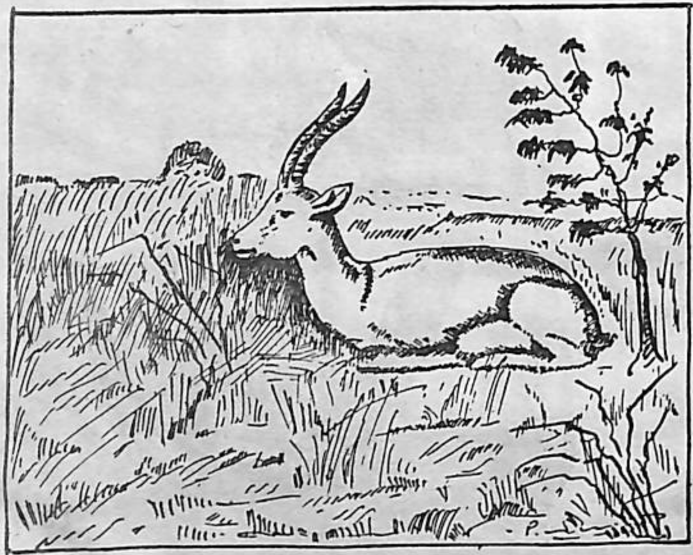
It is found in all villages and in waste lands. They come out during the night and howl. Their tail is long. Their skin is sometimes used as fur.

THE WILD BOAR

(*Sus cristatus*)

Kashmiri name ... Sur

It is common on the mountain spurs of Ajis, the Wular and other sides. They damage crop. The tooth of a boar when hung around a neck is believed to safeguard the wearer especially a child from an evil eye.



GAZELLE
(*Gazella Bennetti*)



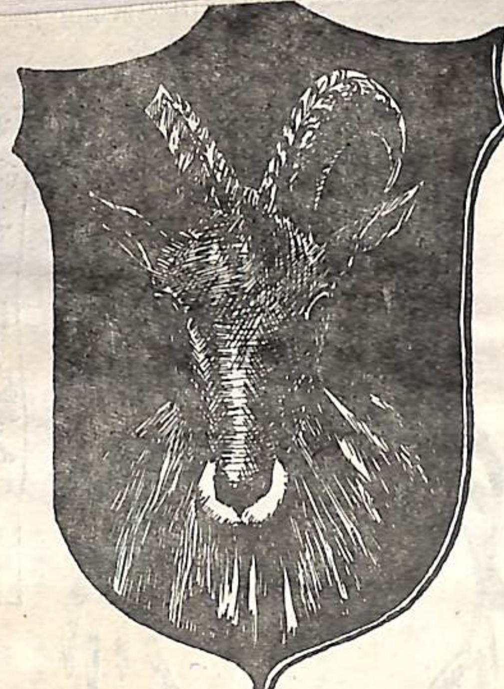
STAG
(*Cervus Cashminianus*)

... of the Curator, Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay)



IBEX

(*Capra sibiricaialmasyi*)



THE THAR

(*Hemitragus Jemlahicus*)

(*By the courtesy of the Curator, Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay*)

THE MARMOT

(*Arctomys hemachalanus*)

Kashmiri name ... Drin

This animal is found in all the high valleys of Kashmir. The Harbhagwan Valley was found riddled with holes and a number of animals standing on their hind legs and hooting on the intruder and disappearing at once into their holes. These are handsome animals with reddish colour from the skin of which furs are made. They are found along Gilgit and Ladakh.

THE GREAT TIBETAN SHEEP

(*Ovis Ammon hodgsoni*)

It is known in Ladakh by Nyan and female by Nyamme. The chief haunts of this sheep are Chang-Chinne valley in Ladakh and the neighbourhood Pankgong Lake and Chinese Tibet. The male is light brown in colour and with a streak running along the chest, stomach and the inside of the legs. The female is brownish on the upper parts or yellowish white in the lower parts.

THE SHARPU

(*Ovis Vignei Vignei*)

It is also known by the name of Urial. It is distributed from Tibet to Sind. The range of this race lies from Astor to Zanskar, Ladakh. It is a good climber.

THE BHARAL

(*Pseudois nahura*)

Ladakhis call it Narpu. It is widely distributed. It visits high elevations at 17,000 ft. on the Sasser pass leading to

Mustang. In winter for the sake of food it comes down below 10,000 ft.

Ward remarks that in absence of iron implements its horns which are hard were used as hoes in rough cultivation.

THE HIMALAYAN IBEX

(*Capra sibirici*)

It is called Kail. In Ladakh it is called skya. It is from this goat that fine wool, called '*Kail Fhamb*' in Kashmiri is obtained. This stuff is used in weaving shawls. It is from finer quality of '*Kail Fhamb*' that finest quality of shawls are made. Ring shawls are so fine that they are said to pass through the ring of a signet.

The animal is common in Baltistan, Ladakh and in the Shyok Valley. It also bounds in the mountains of Northern Kashmir, Altai and Thain Shan Mountains.

They leave their winter quarters and come down in morning and evening hours to graze green grass. Their real home is among cliffs.

An ibex seems only lying among the precipices from where he can look down and watch the low ground whilst a 'nanny' does sentry duty in the vicinity. In spring the flocks of ibex are fairly large and all sizes are banded together, but in summer large bucks wander off on the heights leaving females and kids on the lower ground.

THE TAHR

(*Hemitragus Jemlaicus*)

Kashmiri name ... Khras or Jigla

In Chamba it is called kart. It is found among rocks girdled with cedar trees, Pantsal Range, lower Wardwon, Kishtwar

Bhaderwah and Chamba in the eastward regions of the Punjab and the Utter Pradesh Himalayas and on the southern mountain Range. The female is smaller and has less shaggy hair.

THE SEROW

(*Capricornis sumatrensis*)

Kashmiri name ... Ramu

It is found among rocks and forests where under growth is very sparse. It is easy to find, but not always to get at it. Its habitat extends from Kashmir to Kashtwar, Chamb, Kulu and as far as Nepal. A frightened screw utters screaming whistle which when over started will continue for sometime. The conspicuous colour is blackish red and reddish grey. They wander about very little and prefer to live on the same hill. 'The young are born about May and stay for a long time with their mother. The pairing season is in autumn.'

GREY GORAL

(*Nemorhaedus goral*)

It is widely distributed and prefers to be in any ground between 2,000 ft. to about 8,000 ft. In winter it finds difficult to descend below the snow line.

They are common on the Pantsal Range. There are several races found in the wild mountain areas spread from the Shiwalik Range to Jammu, Chamb, Madhya Pradesh, Nepal, Tibet, Burma and China.

THE NILGAI ANTELOPE

(*Bosephalus tragocamelus*)

This animal is held sacred in Jammu. It is protected. It is a wonderful jumper and is a heavily built animal. It is found

all along Kumaon, Jammu and Sialkot. Its skin is used for mushak to carry water or to make a raft in crossing water.

THE TIBETAN ANTELOPE

(*Pantholops hodgsoni*)

Kashmiri name ... Hiran
Ladakhi name ... Cheru

This Antelope prefers to live over heights of 14,500 ft. and is possible that they might be migrating there. In spring sexes segregate and young males remain with females and later females are left alone. In summer they migrate from Mastagh Range and Karakorams. They are gregarious.

THE TIBETAN GAZELLE

(*Gazella procapra picticaudata*)

This is an animal of plateau of Northern Ladakh, Rupshu and by the Kyun salt lakes. It is found in small herds and is distributed to Turkistan and Mangolia. More than a dozen are rarely seen in a herd. It does not descend below 14,000 ft. In summer it is found in higher elevations.

THE MARKHOR

(*Capra falconeri cashmiriensis*)

The Markhor is found on all the southern, eastern and northern Range of the Kashmir Valley. It is also found in Baltistan, Chilas, Gilgit, Chitral, Baluchistan, and Afganistan. They are gregarious and migratory and wander about in search of pasturage from place to place. They have keen powers of scent and sight and are hard to approach. They are shy animals. In summer they go upto 16,000 ft. Their winter coat is grey or yellowish grey, but as the summer comes on the general colouring changes from reddish to yellowish brown. The old

bucks have griezzled beards, darker in front and underneath. The front portions of the legs below the knees are dark.'

The animal prefers to be in rocky mountains which are in the neighbourhood of low ground of 7,000 ft. or less. In winter it moves, lower down. It does not live in the high hills covered with deep snow. In the day time they rest high up. In the evening they rush down from the steepest slopes of the mountains with a great speed.

THE LEOPARD

(*Felis pardus*)

Kashmiri name ... Suh

Leopards are beautiful animals. They are ferocious. Where deer, sheep and goat, whether tame or wild, go, there the leopards come.

They are found in hilly parts, Dachigam Rakh and such like places. In snow, leopards kill stag.

THE SNOW LEOPARD

(*Felis unica*)

Kashmiri name ... Chot suh

Vernacular name ... Safed Cheta

It is an animal of high elevations and generally comes out during night. It is found in Gilgit, Ladakh and Baltistan.

THE LYNX

(*Felis lynx*)

The habitat of this animal extends throughout Gilgit, Ladakh and Turkestan from 6,000 ft. to great heights. It is a powerful animal.

THE GOLDEN CAT

(*Felis temmincki*)

This cat has a red colour with dark lines above the back. The lower parts are lighter in colour, the underpart of the tail is whitish. The cheeks are marked by a line of white and yellowish white. Also near the eye there are blackish spots. The ears are black.

PALLAS' CAT

(*Felis manul*)

The cat is found in Ladakh, Turkestan and Mangolia. A live full grown male measures (Body and head) 1′-1″ and tail 8½″. The hair on its body give a curious silvery appearance of shades of brown marked with blackish brown. On the back the sides have cross stripes of deep brown. The lower portions are pure white. The limbs in parts are tawny marked with black. The head is marked with irregular spots. The fur is very dense silky and long.

THE LEOPARD CAT

(*Felis bengalensis*)

The cat has a beautiful skin. The general colour is light tawny with black and broad lines on the back merging into black spots. On the hind parts and limbs and on the legs are three distinct black bars. The lower portions are spotted.

The tail is marked with black spots. A white line extends from the eyes to the back of the head. The ears are black edging on to the white and the inside of the ear is tawny. There are other cats also.

The jungle cat (Felis chaus), the waved cat (Felis torquata) the desert cat (Felis ornata).

These beautiful animals are killed for their skin. They are the charm of the land and need to be preserved for natural beauty.

THE BLACK BEAR

(*Selenarctos thibetanus*)

Kashmiri name	...	Haput
Vernacular name	...	Reach

The bear is a common animal. It creates havoc in maize fields. He moves into the lower ranges where they can get food. Shepherds in Harbhagwan Valley, told me of their several encounters with bears when they went to tend their flocks. When the female bears cubs or is about to have cubs lie up in winter so also do old males who live in the caves or in the hollow tree in the higher mountains.

THE BROWN BEAR

(*Ursus isabellinus*)

Kashmiri name	...	Gora Katsur
Vernacular name	...	Bhora Reach

Baltis call it Dinmer. This bear is not now found in great numbers. It is said that this bear has acute sense of smell while it is devoid of sight and hearing. This is not as fierce as the black one.

THE WILD ASS

(*Equus hemionus*)

Kashmiri name ... Bota Khar

Tibetian's call it Kiang. This wild ass is found in Mongolia,

Turkestan and Ladakh. The upper portions of the body of the animal are ruddy chest nut, while underneath it is white. A dark brown bar runs from nape of the neck to the tuft of the tail.

'The Kiang is much given to galloping on the hard stony plains, its great weight and velocity with which it travels, but for the protection afforded by Nature would destroy the whole structure of the leg'. —Ward

The padding material of the foot is elastic. A herd consists of three to ten or twelve. The wild Ass is shy but inquisitive and when danger is confirmed, will stand for sometime snort and gallop off.

THE YAK

(*Bos grunniens*)

Kashmiri name ... Zomba
Ladakhi name ... Bon Chour

The animal is called Dong by the Tibetians. An old bull appears a mass of black hair which flow down from the body, shoulder sides and chest. The tail has a bunch of hair over a foot in thickness fore-legs, almost concealed by hair. The tail 'har bush' is used in worship. The sense of hearing and smelling is highly developed. In spring and summer a large number of cows and calves congregate on a good pasture land. Bulls are generally found in parties of three or four till late summer. The breeding season extends through July, August and September.

One male is accompanied by four or more cows. Wild yaks cross freely with the Ladakhi cattle which are turned out when the pairing season begins.

'The local name of the hybrid is "ZO" for the male and Tsomo for the female animal. The cross breed beasts are very sure

footed. They are used for riding and are capable of carrying a load of about 200 lbs. on very difficult ground'.

—Ward

THE MUSK DEER

(*Moschus moschiferus*)

Kashmiri name	...	Kostura
Ladakhi name	...	Rebjo

This useful Deer extends all along the Himalayas, China and Siberia. The fur of the animal is coarse and brittle. The Hindus wrap the skin of this animal round the body when the boy is invested with the Holy Thread. The ceremony is held with great sanctity. Both the sexes are hornless.

It is a pity that this animal is killed for musk pod. Hence they are decreasing in numbers. Such useful animal needs to be preserved. When the animal is killed the musk pod round the naved of the animal is tied. It brings very high price. It is called 'Nafa'. It is used for medicine and writing charms. Another variety of the animal is Barking Deer (*Muntiacus vaginalis*) which is confined to the hilly tracts of India.

THE KASHMIR STAG

(*Cervus cashmirianus*)

Kashmiri name	...	Hangul
Female minor	...	Roos Kot
Vernacular name	...	Barasingha

This stag is found throughout the valley excluding the Pantsal and Kaj Nag Ranges. It is chiefly found in Wardwan Valley, Kashtiwar, Bhaderwah, Gurez and in Tilail villages. It is also found in Chamba State.

When on the top of Zaberwan hill (9,000 ft.), with a party of students, we found half a dozen of the kind on the hill amidst the tall grass.

Female has no horns. The colouring depends on the climate of the place where they live and also on the age. The hair on the neck is coarse, long and sometimes thick. This is much less marked on the female than on the male. The hair on the lower part of the neck of the stag is very long and in an old animal very dark brown. 'Big stags cast their horns about March 15 to April 1st. Young ones often carry their antlers into May. After shedding their horns most go up hill and congregate under the snow line, as soon as the weather get warm. They cross the passes which lead to Kashtawar or Wardwan or occupy highest ravines in the Sind, the Lidder or in the passes leading to Baltistan'. —Ward

The rutting seasons commence about September 15. In hard winters when there is heavy snowfall the stags come down low and in March also where there is green pasturage they descend. Sadhus like to sit on the skin of the stag for it is warm and adds an aura of sanctity to their devotion.

There is Beauty in Rock.
There is Beauty in Plant.
There is Beauty in Animal.
There is Beauty in Space.
Beauty and Love are interdependent.
God is Love.
Love envelops All.
May Peace be to All.

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